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STATE OF ISRAEL

DOCUMENTS ON THE FOREIGN POLICY OF ISRAEL, 1954

COMPANION VOLUME

STATE OF ISRAEL
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FOREWORD

The present volume, covering the year 1954, is the ninth in the series relating to the foreign policy of Israel. This year is marked by a rising tension in the foreign relations of the state of Israel and in deterioration in the security situation along the borders. Moshe Sharett, who bore the double duties of prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, had to shoulder an enormous burden of attending to the domestic problems of Israel and simultaneously to cope with the security and foreign relations of the state.

The documents appearing in this volume, like those in previous volumes, are merely a limited selection out of many thousands of documents dealing with the foreign relations and the security problems of Israel. Documents dealing with domestic issues, economical problems and party issues were reproduced only when the instances that these matters had an influence on foreign and security affairs. Owing to the lack of space and the great variety of subjects dealt with in this year, the editors were constrained to apply strict rules of selection so that some subjects (such as, for instance, Israel's relations with East European states) were represented only by a few documents, while others, such as Israel's relations with Latin America and many European states, were eliminated altogether. There were however subjects that were documented almost in their entirety, such as Israel's efforts to save the sabotage network detainees in Egypt or the direct negotiations with Egypt in the last months of the year. Finally, the editors wish to stress that throughout the whole process of selecting and editing, they had unlimited access to archival sources and no restrictions or limitations of a political nature have been imposed on them.

Most of the documents appearing in this volume come from the files of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs kept in the Israel State Archives. A number of documents come from the personal archives of Moshe Sharett, kept at the Central Zionist Archives, from the Israel Military and Defence Establishment Archives and the Ben-Gurion Archives. The editors also had access to the stenographic minutes of the Israeli cabinet and information therefrom has been included in the notes.

Arrangement of the documents. The documents are arranged in chronological order. The position of telegrams in the chronological sequence is governed by the earliest known date, usually by the date of dispatch or if this is not known, by the date of receipt. Reports of discussions and meetings appear under the date of writing, when known. When the date of writing is not known, by the date of the meeting or the discussion.

The text. The text printed in the Main Volume is that of the original document, except for the following editorial changes and emendations:

(a) Addresses of senders and addressees, as well as dates in their original form, have been deleted. In some of the reports, memoranda and minutes, the original headings have also been omitted. The deleted information is incorporated in part in a standard format, in the heading supplied by the editors (see below), or in a note.

(b) A number of passages that are of a personal nature, of no direct relevance to foreign policy, have been omitted. All such changes and omissions are explained in the notes.

(c) Minor errors (slips of the pen, typographical errors and misspellings) have been corrected silently. No attempt has been made beyond that to correct style, syntax and grammar.

(d) Common abbreviations and abbreviations whose meaning is not in doubt have been expanded to full form in square brackets on their first appearance in the document. Subsequently the abbreviations have been retained in the text. Abbreviations of proper names have always been expanded to full form in square brackets. However, abbreviations commonly pronounced as such and acronyms (e.g. U.N., I.D.F., U.S. etc.) have not been altered. Abbreviations commonly used in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs jargon (such as Moabit for the Security Council, Mahmed for the Department of State) have been expanded and converted into their full meaning.

(e) Missing words have in some cases been added, either conjecturally (in square brackets) or on the basis of a parallel text of the same document (in square brackets and with an explanatory note).

(f) Original punctuation and capitalization, as well as British or American spellings, have been retained to the extent possible. Corrections have been made only in cases of obvious mistakes or to avoid misunderstanding. In telegrams, where the original punctuation is partial, the editors exercised much greater liberty in determining capitalization and punctuation.

(g) The outgoing text of telegrams has been used when extant.

Editorial headings. The heading includes the file reference of the document and the place of destination, except where the addressee is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or some other agency of the Government of Israel. The origin of the document and the date of its composition or transmission are given in standard format in the heading.

Editorial notes. These provide information on important events or developments and are numbered sequentially along with the documents. They precede the earliest document that contains a reference to the subject or appear according to the date on which the event took place.

Footnotes. The annotations consist mainly of numbered footnotes, explanatory notes, and cross-references, intended to illuminate topics that might otherwise be unclear and to indicate other documents that contain

additional information. The cross-references occasionally are to files and documents that remain classified, on the assumption that they will eventually be made available to scholars.

Biographical information has been provided when necessary for a proper understanding of the text. Information on most persons mentioned in the text is provided in the index of persons.

Companion Volume. This companion volume consists of English summaries of the Hebrew documents, a translation of the editorial notes, footnotes, introduction and list of documents, and the indexes to the Main Volume.

Index and list of documents. A list of documents and editorial notes, indicating their main subject, appears at the beginning of the volume; two indexes – of persons and of topics and places – are at the end of this volume. References in the index are to document numbers.

We would like to thank all the individuals and institutions who helped in the preparation of this volume: Ambassador (retired) Michael Elitzur, who read the manuscript and made many useful comments; Ambassador Yoel Sher, who gave us sound advice throughout the editing process; Mrs. Michal Zur, the acting director of the Israel Defence and Military Establishment Archives, for her assistance in locating additional documentation; Mrs. Hannah Pinschau, for her assistance with material from the Ben-Gurion Archives; and the staff of the Israel State Archives and the Government Printer for their assistance in the preparation and printing of this volume.

INTRODUCTION

The year under review, 1954, the seventh year of Israel's independence, was characterised by stabilization and economic consolidation of the State of Israel on the one hand, and deterioration in its security and political position on the other. The economic consolidation derived from the growth of production and exports, from the influx of capital to Israel in the wake of the reparations agreement with Germany, from increased aid from Diaspora Jewry and from the leveling off in the number of immigrants after years of increased immigration. The worsening political situation was due to the continued deterioration along Israel's borders, to the decision of the United States and Britain to base their regional policy on agreements and pacts with Arab states and to a turn for the worse in the attitude of the Soviet Union which began to lean unmistakably in the direction of the Arab states.

The Situation on the Borders and Relations with the Arab States.

Jordan

In 1954 relations with Jordan focused on the current problems of security along the borders. The Jordanian border continued to be the most tense of Israel's borders, in the frequency of incursions from the Jordanian side, in the number of victims and, correspondingly, in the number of reprisal raids on the part of Israel. However, as a result of the military activity on both sides of the border, following the Qibya operation[1] the Arab Legion was deployed along the border and took measures to curb the incursions. Further, as a result of political activity, and in particular the involvement of Britain and the United States, there was a perceptible decline both in the frequency of incursions and in the number of casualties.

At the beginning of the year Israel was still engaged in attempting to exploit its move, made during the debates in the Security Council on the Qibya operation, to bring Jordan to agree to a meeting with it in accordance

1. The Qibya operation was carried out after a series of Jordanian incursions into Israel culminating in the murder of a mother and her two children in Yahud on 13 October. In the operation on the night of 14 October, more than 40 inhabitants of the village were killed. Following the operation Israel was severely condemned by the U.N. (See Vol. 8, No. 534 – Editorial Note.)

with Article XII of the armistice agreement between the two countries. This article stated that each of the signatories to the agreement could ask the Secretary-General of the U.N. to convene a conference of representatives of the two sides in order to reconsider, amend or cancel any condition in the agreement (apart from Articles I and III). This request was made by Israel on 23 November 1953.[2] Eban and Gideon Rafael, who initiated the move, believed that it would be useful in minimizing the harmful political effects caused by the Qibya operation, and might also serve as an impetus to improve relations between Jordan and Israel.[3] However, Jordan refused to accept the procedure initiated by Israel. It maintained that such questions must be addressed in the regular framework of meetings of the Mixed Armistice Commission.[4] The efforts of the U.N. Secretary-General, who also joined in the effort to convene the conference, were unsuccessful, and on March 24 he announced that in view of Jordan's absolute refusal to participate he saw no point in continuing with the efforts to convene it at that time.[5]

The Secretary-General's retreat was due to a large extent to the worsening situation along the Jordan border. On March 17, a passenger bus was attacked in broad daylight at Ma'ale Aqrabim on the way from Eilat. 11 of the bus passengers were killed, and only five survived, two of them wounded. This incident, the gravest that had occurred since the end of the War of Independence, caused outrage in Israel, and even more so in view of the fact that the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission which convened to discuss the incident refrained from condemning Jordan, under the pretext that clear-cut evidence had not been found that the murderers had come from its territory. In the discussions held in Israel after the incident it was decided not to react militarily, in order not to blur the horrifying impression of the murder, but first to make full use of political action. This should not consist of the "well-worn routine" of appealing to the Security Council but of demanding that the Powers convene the Security Council as they had hastened to do following the Qibya operation.[6] It was also decided to withdraw from the Mixed Armistice Commission in protest, a protest which lasted over six months.

However, events on the Jordanian frontier imposed a different response. On the night between March 26-27 infiltrators from Jordan killed a guard in the village of Kissalon. Lavon, the Minister of Defence, suggested that a

2. See Vol. 8, No. 531.
3. See Nos. 20, 21.
4. See Nos. 2, 3.
5. See No. 119.
6. See Nos. 117, 132.

limited-scale response should be made, on the grounds that "restraint over this deed as well means letting things go completely". Sharett deliberated, whilst weighing the political fallout on the one hand and the damaging effect of Israeli restraint on public opinion in Israel and the public standing of the government on the other. After careful consideration he approved a local limited response.[7] On the night between March 27-28 the I.D.F. struck at the village of Nahalin and killed nine Jordanians, most of them soldiers. In an announcement to Israeli missions abroad it was stressed that that the operation was in no sense a reprisal raid for the murders in Ma'ale Aqrabim.[8]

The incidents on the Jordanian border greatly disturbed the Powers, particularly Britain, which was linked by a defence treaty with Jordan (from 1948). On 25 March the British Foreign Minister Eden summoned the Israeli ambassador in London, Eliahu Elath, and told him that Britain wished to place the whole question of security on the border before the Security Council. Officials of the Foreign Office then explained that the intention was that the Council should choose from among its members a committee that together with the Israelis and Jordanians would take real steps to improve the situation.[9] The retaliatory raid in Nahalin changed overnight the even-handed attitude displayed by the British after the murders in Ma'ale Aqrabim. Now an accusing finger was being pointed at Israel. Elath was again summoned to the Foreign Office, where he was told that Israel must not take the law into its own hands and that it was liable to find itself, under the terms of the Anglo-Jordanian defense treaty, in a military conflict with Britain. The height of the crisis between the states came in a personal message from the Prime Minister, Churchill, to Prime Minister Sharett on 4 April, in which, after expressing concern over the recent grave incidents and the mounting tension between Israel and its neighbors, he warned that if Britain found itself involved under the terms of its defence treaty obligations with Jordan, in a war between Israel and the Arabs there would be "a sad ending to the hopes and achievements of the last decades in Palestine".[10]

The Ma'ale Aqrabim-Nahalin affair, like the other two issues debated that year in the Security Council, the diversion of the Jordan waters and freedom of passage through the Suez Canal, culminated in a barren and futile debate. As soon as the debate began it ran into difficulties over procedural questions. The attempt of the Powers to turn it into an overall discussion of the situation on the borders and to suggest ways to ameliorate it proved unsuccessful and

7. See No. 133, and M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, vol. 2, pp. 415-416 (Hebrew).
8. See No. 134.
9. See Nos. 125, 129.
10. See Nos. 144, 152 (Editorial Note).

it ended without a resolution. The Council's failure convinced the United States and Britain that they must take measures outside the U.N. After joint consultation the two Powers presented to Israel on 19 June and to Jordan on 22 May an 11-point proposal for easing tension on the borders.[11] The essence of the proposal was to expand and strengthen the authority of the armistice supervisory personnel and also to place barriers along the border and to demarcate it. At the end of June, Israel replied positively to some of the points, including the proposal to demarcate the border and to set up physical obstacles at certain points, but disagreed with the general tenor of the proposals which would significantly expand the authority of the armistice personnel and to transform it from a mediating body into a body acting on its own initiative. Israel expressed disappointment with the fact that only a few of the proposals were of a preventive nature. The Jordanians also responded positively to some of the clauses and disagreed with others.[12]

At the height of the Anglo-American initiative there was a further deterioration on the Jordan-Israel frontier and there began a fresh chain of border incidents, reprisal raids, and condemnations by the Armistice Commission and Big Power intervention to restore quiet to the border. Although the deployment of the Jordanian Army along the border did in fact lead to a halt in incursions and disturbances of a local character, now the two armies were facing each other, both on alert, and every incident resulted in a military response. The most notable in this cycle of events was the outbreak of firing of small arms and mortars along the border in Jerusalem, which began on 30 June and only ended on the night between 2-3 July, following the intervention of the armistice supervisory machinery and representatives of the Western Powers. The situation along the border continued to be explosive. On 28 August a guard was killed in the settlement of Ramat Raziel and in retaliation the I.D.F. operated on the night of the 1-2 September in Beit Liqya, killing two soldiers, wounding five, and taking three prisoner. Israel was condemned in the Mixed Armistice Commission for this operation and for another operation in the Mount Hebron region, and was severely reprimanded by the United States.[13] This time Israel was alarmed by the force of the condemnation, quickly returned the Jordanian prisoners, returned to the Mixed Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission (on 20 October, after its chairman had been replaced) and exercised restraint along the border. This situation of relative quiet along the border prevailed until the middle of 1956 when tension was renewed even more strongly.

11. See No. 257. France endorsed the main proposals, but had reservations about their wording.
12. See No. 302.
13. See No. 349.

These events accelerated the pressure of the British, the Americans and the U.N. to restore quiet to the Jordanian border, and this time through the resumption of meetings of the local commanders along the border. These meetings took place under the terms of an agreement signed in 1951 and renewed every few months. Israel had stopped participating in the meetings after the Ma'ale Aqrabim incident, and its withdrawal from the Jordan-Israel Mixed Armistice Commission. An appeal to Israel to renew the agreement was made by Britain and the United States as early as mid-April and was also included in the 11-point proposal.[14] In September the chief of the U.N. Observer Force took the initiative and a number of drafts were exchanged between the parties. This time the proposed agreement was confined to Jerusalem and its environs.[15] Disagreement over the role of the U.N. in the agreement (the Jordanians insisting that the U.N. should be a party, whereas Israel desired a bilateral agreement) prevented its signing. The agreement came into force in April 1955, after being approved verbally by the two sides without being signed, since the dispute over the addition of the signature of the U.N. representative as a party had still not been resolved.

Egypt

During the year under discussion Israel-Egypt relations were influenced by two very significant processes: Egypt's negotiations with Britain on the evacuation of the British base in the Suez Canal area and Nasser's emergence as the unchallenged leader of Egypt. There were three points of friction between the two states: the military tension along the Gaza Strip border, the Egyptian restrictions on freedom of passage in the Suez Canal and the Straits of Eilat and Israel's attempts to abolish them, and the arrest and trial of the Israeli spy and sabotage ring in Egypt. Unlike relations with Jordan, direct and indirect contacts were held with Egypt in the course of the year. These contacts were designed to resolve crises in each of the points of friction, whilst Israel at every opportunity sought to widen the contacts into general talks on normalizing relations between the two countries, but without success.

The frequency and intensity of incidents along the Gaza Strip border and the border with Egypt during this year did not approach the rate of those on the Jordanian border. Most of the incursions were of a local and criminal nature, but there were also incidents involving military units and there

14. See Nos. 169, 172, 178.
15. See Nos. 352, 414, 515.

were intelligence-gathering incursions. In the course of the whole year and particularly from September onwards, Israel adopted a policy of restraint in this sector with the aim of preventing deterioration. Incidents that occurred were dealt with at the level of the Mixed Armistice Commission.

The question of freedom of passage through the Suez Canal and the Straits had long been a stumbling-block in relations with Egypt. In September 1951 the Security Council had called on Egypt to remove all the restrictions on freedom of passage through the Suez Canal for cargoes without any relation to their destination. In practice the Egyptians permitted the passage of non-strategic goods to Israel both through the Canal and the Straits of Eilat provided that the ships carrying the cargoes flew a foreign flag. But at the end of 1953 the Egyptians tightened the arrangements for passage through the Canal and also prohibited the passage of food. These restrictions were also applied in the Straits. In view of this, Israel decided to raise the matter again in the Security Council and to introduce a resolution referring to the 1951 resolution and broadening its application to the Straits. Israel lodged its complaint on 28 January.[16] During the debate a number of attempts were made to talk with the Egyptians in order to find a practical and reasonable arrangement regarding passage through the Canal and the Straits. The talks were held between Eban and Mahmud Azmi, Egypt's U.N. representative. Eban was instructed to widen the scope of the discussion to address the whole range of relations between Israel and Egypt, but his Egyptian interlocutor did not have such freedom and tried to confine the discussion to legal matters suggesting that the two sides should present legal opinions which would enable the Secretary-General to act under the terms of the 1951 resolution.[17] The debate in the Security Council ended on 29 March with a draft resolution again endorsing the 1951 resolution. With regard to passage through the Straits it was decided in the resolution that the complaint on this matter be first dealt with by the Mixed Armistice Commission.[18] Although this draft resolution did gain a majority, the Soviet Union's veto thwarted its acceptance. This was the second time that the Soviet Union had vetoed a motion concerning Israel, after the affair of the vote on Israel's Jordan River diversion work. After the vote Azmi announced in the Council that from now on Egypt would of her own free will display tolerance with regard to the passage of Israeli goods through the Canal, without changing its basic position on the state of war between it and Israel and the list of goods prohibited from passing through the Canal.

16. See No. 45.
17. See Nos. 78, 79.
18. See No. 139.

Following the vote in the Security Council, Israel announced to Egypt that it intended to assert its rights to free passage in the Canal in practice, and it did in fact continue to send cargoes on ships flying a foreign flag from Haifa to Eilat and back without any interference. However, on the publication of the main points of the Anglo-Egyptian agreement on the evacuation of the British base in the Suez Canal area, when it became clear that the agreement did not offer a reasonable solution with regard to freedom of navigation, Israel decided to put Egypt to a practical test by the passage of a ship flying the Israeli flag. After exploring the various possibilities, it was decided to dispatch the trial vessel through the Canal from East Africa to Haifa and to carry out the operation before the signing of the final text of the agreement. It was also decided that the response to the arrest of the ship, if it were stopped, would be diplomatic action only. On 28 September the *Bat Galim*, a 500-ton cargo vessel flying the Israeli flag and with an Israeli crew, carrying a cargo of meat, wood and hides, arrived at the southern end of the Suez Canal and was stopped and held by the Egyptians. On that same day Israel presented a letter to the Security Council demanding the release of the ship with its crew and cargo so that it could continue on to Haifa, and on 4 October it called for the convening of the Council. Egypt, for its part, lodged a complaint with the Mixed Israel-Egypt Armistice Commission under the pretext that the ship's crew had opened fire on two Egyptian fishing boats in its territorial waters. The mutual complaints of Israel and Egypt were discussed in turn by the Security Council and the Armistice Commission, but Israel failed to win the unequivocal support of the Western Powers in favour of freedom of navigation. The Powers vindicated Israel in principle but were averse to putting Egypt to the test at such a sensitive stage in the negotiations on the Anglo-Egyptian agreement and sought to refrain from putting the issue to the vote for fear of another Soviet veto.[19] The end result was that Israel did not even manage to have a resolution adopted that reiterated the 1951 resolution, and the most it achieved was the release of the *Bat Galim* crew. The Egyptians announced their willingness to release the boat, but on condition that it did not continue on its way to Haifa. In the end the ship was impounded by the Egyptians.

One cannot in fact understand relations between Israel and Egypt without taking into consideration the negotiations between Britain and Egypt for the evacuation of British forces from the Suez Canal area. The discussions on this agreement had begun in April 1953 and continued for the best part of 1954. As early as the start of negotiations and in the course of them Israel had drawn Britain's attention to the fact that the proposed agreement was

19. See Nos. 409, 412.

liable to upset the balance between Israel and Egypt and would give Egypt military advantages. It also demanded that the agreement guarantee freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal.[20] The British gave general and noncommittal answers, and in particular reiterated Britain's pledge to maintain the balance of forces in accordance with the Three Power agreement of 1950. When the main points of the agreement were made public on 27 July, it transpired that it did not contain any sort of guarantee or clear commitment with regard to Israel's security. With regard to the Suez Canal it only contained a general statement that Egypt recognized that the Canal was an international waterway and that it was obligated to abide by the terms of the Convention of Constantinople of 1888 concerning freedom of navigation in the Canal.[21]

Publication of the main points of the agreement and reports that the United States intended to grant military aid to Egypt following its signing only added to the feeling of political isolation and the pervading anxiety in Israel. This feeling found expression in a discussion that Sharett held with the top echelons of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 31 July, a few days after publication of the main points of the agreement. In the discussion Sharett said that Israel had done everything possible to try and forge military ties with the United States, but their reaction had at first been evasive and then negative. Now they were saying explicitly that they must first associate themselves with the Arabs, that they need them at present and not Israel; they would give them arms first, and when they had finished – would supply Israel. Sharett left one more glimmer of hope by noting that there was still the possibility of turning to Britain and exploiting the disquiet prevailing among broad circles with regard to the agreement.[22]

This despondent atmosphere in Israel undoubtedly prompted the desperate attempt made by the Intelligence Branch in the I.D.F. to strike at British and American institutions in Egypt with the aim of undermining relations between these states and Egypt, and perhaps delaying or thwarting the signing of the agreement and the American military aid promised to Egypt in the wake of the signing. To this end a spy and sabotage ring which had been deployed in Egypt for some time in a dormant state, was activated. On 2 July and 14 July the members of the ring carried out two acts of sabotage which caused minor damage. The ring was uncovered and its members caught in the course of the unsuccessful attempt to perpetrate the third act of sabotage, on 23 July.[23] This affair, known as "the mishap", took place without the

20. See Vol. 8, No. 543; No.1.
21. See No. 295 and note 1 there.
22. See No. 305.
23. See No. 418 (Editorial Note.)

knowledge of Sharett and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs went into action only after the announcement of the charge sheet against the members of the ring on 12 October and from then onwards and during the course of the entire trial it did everything possible to prevent the death sentence being imposed on the accused.

In the shadow of the trial of the members of the ring and the supreme efforts made to save them, there took place from the end of November 1954 till the end of December 1954 a fascinating and tension-filled sequence of direct contacts and exchanges of messages with Egypt. On 23 November Maurice Orbach, a British Member of Parliament, met with Nasser. Orbach had come to Egypt on a mission for the World Jewish Congress in order to study the affair of the imprisonment of the members of the sabotage ring, but before his arrival he visited Israel and was briefed by Sharett. In conversation Nasser told him that he wanted peace and would do everything to achieve it, but at this juncture, because of the internal situation in Egypt he could not take steps prematurely. Regarding the question of freedom of passage in the Canal, he said that Israeli cargoes were passing through the Canal in any case, and asked that they should not embarrass him by insisting on the passage of ships flying the Israeli flag. As for the sabotage ring, he replied that the matter was in the hands of the Egyptian prosecutor-general but he promised to consider Orbach's request for mercy.[24]

At the end of November 1954 an Egyptian envoy, Kamal Youssef approached the Israeli Embassy in Paris and informed it about the desire of the ruling military junta in Egypt, headed by Nasser, to reach agreement with Israel. In the course of the ensuing conversation a number of main points were articulated, the central one being Israel's desire to reach an understanding with Egypt, to negotiate a practical solution to the refugee problem, and to avoid territorial changes.[25] In the middle of December Israel submitted to Egypt a plan for a settlement for a limited period of time to ease the tension. The plan included the Israeli demands concerning the trial, the arrest of the *Bat Galim,* arrangements for passage through the Canal, the situation on the border and a proposal for secret high-level talks over future relations. The message was conveyed through Orbach, and the reply arrived through an Egyptian emissary on behalf of Nasser who reported that the Revolutionary Council harbored no aggressive intentions and desired a

24. See No. 510.
25. See No. 509. From the documentation the status of the draft paper contained in this document is not clear. In the document Palmon wrote that it refers to "the paper of Kamel Yussef". From the text it emerges that it refers to Israeli proposals.

settlement by peaceful means, and that Nasser was prepared to discuss any practical proposal for improving the situation.[26] After that, Nasser and Sharett exchanged messages. Sharett wrote that he noted with great satisfaction Nasser's desire to achieve a peaceful solution to the problems pending between Israel and Egypt, and especially welcomed his readiness to consider steps to improve the existing situation and reduce tension. Sharett then proceeded to stress that there were two problems whose treatment would have a decisive impact on the relations between the two countries: freedom of passage in the Suez Canal and the Cairo trial.[27]. Nasser replied in a brief message that he was very happy that Sharett was aware of the efforts Egypt was making to promote peace and that he hoped that these efforts would be reciprocated by similar efforts on the part of Israel. In a verbal addendum conveyed by his emissary, Abd el Rahman Sadiq, Nasser referred to the problems Sharett had mentioned in his message and to Israel's proposals for easing the tension: he promised to release the *Bat Galim* with its crew, but without allowing the ship to proceed on its way north to Haifa through the Canal; as to the arrangements with regard to passage through the Canal, he did not think that at the moment it was possible to change them; as for the trial of the members of the sabotage ring, he said that the Egyptian government could not intervene in the legal process; Egypt was interested in quiet on the borders and, regarding the proposal for high-level contacts, he replied that at the moment there was no room for such talks. In addition, he complained that the Israeli intervention against the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian agreement, the uncovering of the sabotage ring, and the *Bat Galim* affair had raised the tension in the relations between the two countries, and in such a situation they must act to reduce tension and lay the groundwork for a settlement.[28] The imposition of the sentences in the Cairo trial, in which two of the members of the sabotage ring were sentenced to death, put an end to this chapter of contacts. Subsequently, Gideon Rafael summed up the events and wrote: "This was a painful and very disappointing affair for all those who had worked so hard to calm the situation and advance relations. However it is apparently true that Egypt is a broken reed. Obviously, one cannot conduct policy out of disappointment or despair, and even if we have ended a particular chapter, let us not burn the book. Who knows when and under what circumstances we shall open it once more."[29]

26. See Nos. 542, 562.
27. See No. 559.
28. See Nos. 576, 577.
29. See G. Rafael to R. Shiloah, 1 February 1955, 130.15/3574/11.

Syria

The Syrian front was seemingly quieter than those of Jordan and Egypt, but the conflicts that broke out in this sector were no less dangerous than those in the east and south because of internal instability in Syria, and because of the fact that they revolved around control of the region's water sources.

On 25-28 February there was a military coup in Syria which led to the overthrow of Adib Shishakli and the appointment of El-Atassi, the previous president. Reports about events in Syria worried Israel because of the fear that Iraq would exploit the disorder in Syria to take control of the state. In internal discussions that took place in Israel, Lavon, the minister of defence, together with Dayan, the I.D.F. chief of staff, suggested that Israel should enter the demilitarized zone as a security measure. Sharett vigorously opposed the suggestion and argued that military logic would drag Israel into armed intervention in Syria proper, a conflict with the U.N. and a real threat from the Three Powers, culminating in an ignominious retreat on the orders of the Security Council.[30] In the end Sharett's opinion prevailed and the I.D.F. did not enter the demilitarized zone.

Another problem in the relations with Syria was Syria's seizure of control of the north eastern corner of Lake Tiberias. This territory was under full Israeli sovereignty as the armistice line passed 10 metres east of the lake shore. But in actual fact it was a very long time since Israel had had access to the strip of shore, and also Israeli fishing in the area was prevented. Israel sought a decision on this issue, and on 11 March dispatched a few fishing boats, covered by police boats armed with cannons, to the area. Exchanges of fire ensued but there were no casualties. Subsequently, the Armistice Commission upheld the Israeli position and Syria was banned from fishing in the lake, from interfering with Israeli fishing and from using the ten-meter strip on the lake shore. Israel was condemned for the presence of boats equipped with cannons in the defensive area of the lake.[31] This decision in principle did not prevent the continuation of clashes in the problematic area of Lake Tiberias during this year, but these did not develop into a major crisis.

A further conflict over water revolved around the Jordan channel diversion works. Israel had begun these works in September 1953 as part of the construction of a national water carrier, which would carry water from the Jordan via Lake Tiberias to the Negev. The work was being carried out close to the Benot Yaaqov bridge, in the demilitarized zone. Syria

30. See Nos. 93, 94 and note 1 there.
31. See No. 110.

complained about these works, at first to the Armistice Commission and afterwards, it lodged a complaint with the Security Council (on 16 October 1953). It maintained that the works were being carried out on Arab-owned lands, that they violated the water rights of the Arab inhabitants in the demilitarized zone and granted Israel a strategic advantage. At the start of the debate in the Security Council on October 27 Israel announced, as a sign of goodwill, that it was suspending work during the Council deliberations. In the course of the debate the Western Powers submitted a draft resolution which authorized the head of the U.N. Observer Force to resolve the conflict in a way that would guarantee the interests of Syria and Israel whilst safeguarding the rights of the inhabitants in the demilitarized zone. In the debate, which took place on 22 January 1954, this proposal gained a majority but a Soviet veto thwarted its adoption.[32] In spite of the fact that it had not been officially adopted, Israel considered the draft resolution as operative and sought to bring about resumption of the work in accordance with the principles of the resolution, but the chief of staff of the U.N. Observer Force delayed his decision until he received a report from experts in the matter. The experts' recommendations, which were given at the beginning of April, removed the majority of obstacles from the resumption of work,[33] except that this time difficulties arose from another direction, namely the American fear that the Israeli water project would jeopardize the regional water project planned by the United States – the Johnston plan. Consequently, under American pressure, Israel postponed the resumption of Jordan River diversion work, and in fact the work was never resumed. The National Water Carrier project, which became operational in 1964, pumps its water directly from Lake Tiberias.

The Regional Water Plan

The National Water Carrier project, designed to carry water from the Jordan and Lake Tiberias to the Negev, was not in fact compatible with the regional water plan for the exploitation of Jordan and Yarmuk waters advanced by the Americans. This plan, "the Main Plan" as it was called in the initial stages of the discussion, after the name of the engineering office that had drafted it, and the initiative for which came from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, was adopted by the United States as the main instrument for solving the refugee problem and also perhaps for resolving

32. See No. 28.
33. See No. 241 and note 1 there.

the overall Israel-Arab conflict. It referred to the open waters in the catchment area of the waters of the Jordan and the Yarmuk and allocated them to be used to irrigate the land in the Jordan basin only, including land east of the Jordan. Additional elements of the plan were the transfer of the surplus waters of the Yarmuk to Lake Tiberias, turning it into a reservoir for storage and flow regulation, and the division of the water between Jordan, Israel and Syria according to a fixed plan. Israel's criticism centered on the failure to include the Litani River in the regional plan, on the restriction on the use of the water in the Jordan and the Yarmuk Valley, and on the relative amount of water allocated to Israel (the original division earmarked 63.5 percent to Jordan, 32.5 percent to Israel and 4 percent to Syria).

In June 1954 Eric Johnston, the special representative of the President of the United States for the regional water project, paid his second visit to Israel. Prior to his arrival Eban and Shiloah met with him on 30 May and told him of Israel's reservations about his plan and of Israel's plan, called the "Cotton Plan" after the name of the water engineer who drew it up. This plan almost doubled the overall amount of water available for division, in that it also included the waters of the Litani River, increased Israel's share in the division of water to 55 percent and did not limit the use of the water to the Jordan basin only. Johnston announced that at this juncture his government was firm in its decision to begin the water project without the Litani waters, but he promised that a discussion on the inclusion of the Litani would be held at a later date. On the other hand, he agreed to remove the restrictions on the use of water to the Jordan basin only.[34] Shiloah's conclusion at this stage of the discussions was that the water plan had become a key slogan among the top echelons of the American Administration and many believed that peace and stability in the Middle East could not be achieved without a fundamental revolution in the general economic and social situation in the region. Therefore Israel had to be careful not to obstruct the Johnston mission.[35]

The talks that were held with Johnston were wide-ranging and comprehensive, and Israel was represented by the Prime Minister and leading ministers. Johnston presented the main points of his plan and insisted that the discussion should be confined to the division of the waters of the Jordan and the Yarmuk on the basis of the "Main Plan," and that the Litani River be excluded from the plan as an immediate practical possibility, since to bring it up now was liable to endanger the entire project. He insisted that the relative percentages of the division of the waters be kept according to the

34. See No. 232.
35. See No. 243.

"Main Plan," but was prepared to accept the Israeli demand for the use of waters outside the Jordan basin. Another point of contention concerned the Lake Tiberias. Israel was not opposed to turning Lake Tiberias into a storage and central water reservoir, but was not prepared to agree to the international supervision over the lake that this would entail. The end result was that this mission of Johnston did not advance the plan. In a report which Sharett submitted to the Government on 23 June he stressed the points that Israel could not make concessions on, and proposed that in the meantime Israel and Jordan should begin to implement the national projects that they were interested in: the Benot Yaaqov project in Israel and the Adassiyya project (the storage of water in the upper Yarmuk basin) in Jordanian territory.

The Arab Refugee Question

In the year under review there was no breakthrough whatsoever towards resolving the question of the Arab refugees. Israel, for its part, nonetheless made a concession in this area in that on 27 September it announced that it was prepared to unfreeze the remainder of the blocked accounts of the refugees located in Israeli banks. Israel also attempted to use this step as a lever for direct negotiations with the refugees, or at least with some of them. To this end, negotiations were conducted with the representatives of the organization calling itself "the Palestine Refugee Congress," an organization founded in Jordan in 1949 at a gathering of refugee representatives, which expressed agreement, amongst other things, to the 1947 partition plan. The Congress's activity was prohibited by the Jordanian government in 1950. This step was unsuccessful because the Conciliation Commission, which dealt with the issue, and also American and British diplomats cast doubts on the extent to which the Congress represented the refugees.[36]

Israel's readiness to unfreeze the blocked accounts was compatible with its general policy on this issue. The main thrust of this policy was that the fundamental solution of the refugee question would come by settling them in Arab countries. With regard to the land owned by the refugees, Israel had more than once indicated its readiness to compensate the refugees for the lands that they had lost. Sharett reiterated this commitment in a speech to the Mapai Council on 21 August, but took care to point out that this readiness would not last for ever and in any case it should be remembered that the refugees' lands had not been acquired by Israel on the free market

36. See Nos. 386, 446, 462.

but as the result of a bloody war and an invasion, that had cost it much blood, not to speak of the boycott and blockade, actions which were causing Israel heavy economic damage.[37]

From the international standpoint there was no real progress on this issue. In November 1954 an ad hoc committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations began to debate the annual report of the director of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for the Refugees. At the conclusion of the debate it was decided to extend the Agency's mandate by five years.

Relations with the United States

Despite the day-to-day involvement with matters of security and the questions of water and the refugees, the architects of Israel's foreign policy did not forget the fact that the central axis in the State's foreign relations had been and remained relations with the Western Powers, and above all with the United States.

Relations between the two states during the year were influenced by the new direction of American Middle Eastern policy. The new Administration, which took office in early 1953, elaborated a new defence policy and decided to surround the Soviet Union with a ring of military bases and a system of pacts which could in time of trial initiate aggressive action against it. According to this approach the Middle East was assigned a key status, the aim being to establish a Middle Eastern security pact which would be based in the first stage on the states bordering, or in the vicinity of, the Soviet Union. In 1954 the Americans laid the first bricks for what was called "the Northern Tier" when, in April 1954, on their initiative an agreement between Turkey and Pakistan was signed and they themselves signed agreements for military aid for Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and Iraq. At the end of the process the Baghdad Pact was established in February 1955, which included at first Turkey and Iraq, joined in the course of the year by Britain, Iran and Pakistan. The United States was not officially a member of the pact, but supported and assisted it.

The United States-led redeployment in the region and the system of pacts between the Arab states and Britain and the United States, which was woven around it, without Israel participation, worried Israel, which felt neglected and isolated, facing a powerful bloc of states that were being granted Western aid and support. However, Israel had no real answer to this situation. In a series of internal consultations in the Ministry of Foreign

37. See the report of the committee for clarifying the refugee question, December 1953, 130.15/3473/10, Nos. 336, 488.

Affairs, two approaches were formulated: the first, that of the minister of foreign affairs, in accordance with which the Ministry acted, said that they had to step up the information campaign against giving arms to the Arabs, even if this involved the risk that Israel would not receive arms either, and as regards the organization of regional defence – they must continue to proclaim Israel's readiness to participate in such defence, but in a restrained manner and without excessive fervour.[38] The second position, which the staff in the Washington Embassy advocated, said that a purely negative approach would not succeed since it would be interpreted as ignoring the security requirements of the free world, and since all that it could achieve was to delay the outcome. It would be better to act in two directions simultaneously: to oppose vigorously the arming of the Arab states and at the same time to demand that the Americans enter into discussions with Israel on preparing it adequately to play a part in regional defence.[39] After the publication of the agreement for American military aid to Iraq at the end of April, Sharett instructed the Embassy in Washington for the moment to make full use of the line of opposition to the arming of the Arab states. However the ground used should contain the beginning of a transition to positive demands – a public guarantee of Israel's territorial integrity by United States and calling for a promise to give it arms as well in compensation.[40]

As if these disturbing steps by the United States were not enough, two public statements by Henry Byroade, the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Estern, South Asian and African Affairs, caused great anxiety in Israel. In two speeches Byroade said that it would be better for Israel to regard itself as a Middle Eastern country and not as the nucleus of a religious group scattered throughout the world, and that Israel must dispel the fears of the Arabs with regard to mass immigration. In addition he condemned the reprisal raids and while he suggested resolving the refugee problem by settling them in Arab states, he also said that Israel had to absorb a number of refugees in its territory and to compensate them.[41] Sharett was alarmed, and on his instructions, on 13 May, Eban and Shiloah met with Secretary of State Dulles in order to express deep anxiety over the state of relations between the two countries and to ask if Byroade's statements should be viewed as an official definition of United States policy vis-à-vis Israel.

38. See Nos. 56, 97.
39. See Nos. 8, 13.
40. See No. 192.
41. The remarks were made on 9 April in Dayton, Ohio, in a lecture to the Council for World Affairs, and on 1 May in Philadelphia to the American Council for Judaism. See No. 168, note 2, No. 198, note 1.

Dulles denied that he had any intention whatsoever of harming the security or stability of Israel, which was a friendly state. Eban replied that since Byroade had made his statement publicly, to the Arab world as well as to Israel, only a public action might undo the damage caused. Dulles replied that he would weigh with due seriousness the possibility of a public statement in the spirit of his remarks to Eban.[42]

A public statement of this nature from an official Administration spokesman was not quickly forthcoming, and instead Israel was dealt another blow in the form of a political statement of intent of the United States, conveyed by the chargé d'affaires in the United States Embassy in Israel, Russell. In a tense meeting with Sharett on 30 July, when he read his remarks from the written text and stressed that they represented the views of the State Department, the chargé d'affaires said that the United States was firm in its determination to strengthen the security of the free world, and as a result of the measures required for this purpose and the anticipated transfer of the Suez Canal base to Egypt, a change in the balance of forces in the Middle East was to be expected over the coming decade, although not to an extent to endanger Israel's security. Russell advised Israel not to raise objections to the measures against Soviet aggression and not to oppose the arming of Iraq and Egypt, otherwise its position in the United States would suffer. He called on it to place trust in the U.N., in the United States and in the security arrangements that would be created in the region under the leadership of the United States, and urged Israel to reshape its policy and concentrate on requests for compensatory steps.[43]

Sharett's reaction to this harsh conversation was to instruct Eban to request a meeting with Dulles. In his guidelines for the meeting Eban was asked to refrain from proposals and requests but "to vigorously reject and denounce in order to get them to speak plainly, for better or worse, and then we shall know exactly where we stand".[44] Dulles immediately agreed to the request for a meeting, and Eban was invited to the Secretary on 4 August. In the conversation Eban said that among the Israeli public there prevailed a lack of trust and a sense of abandonment. Dulles replied that in the view of experts Israel was militarily strong and equal to all the Arab states put together, and the United States did not intend to change this situation. At the same time, he was concerned by Eban's statement about the loss of trust in the United States and asked whether the issuing of a personal statement by him would dispel Israel's security anxieties.[45] In a report to the American

42. See No. 208.
43. See No. 304.
44. See No. 308.
45. See No. 313.

diplomats who were meeting in Istanbul, the secretary added to the idea of the declaration the possibility of signing a treaty between Israel and the United States, which would include on the one hand an American guarantee of Israel's security and stability, and on the other hand, guarantees by Israel to refrain from aggression.[46] In the course of the year several attempts were made to draft a declaration or letter of this nature, but disagreements over the contents and text, or the most suitable time to announce it, prevented this step. Israel's request for a security guarantee ran into a legislative obstacle – the need to obtain the approval of Congress – and therefore there was no progress on this subject either. During the remainder of the year under discussion there were no outstanding occurrences affecting the relations between the two states. Here and there were expressions of friendship, generally on festive occasions, but in the two cases when Israel needed assistance most – the arrest of the members of the sabotage ring in Egypt and the Security Council debate on the *Bat Galim* affair – American support was rather lukewarm. At the year's end Israel found itself in its relations with the United States in the same position as it had been in at the beginning of the year – excluded and isolated from the mainstream of United States policy in the Middle East, concerned about its status and the Administration's attitude towards it, without any real military aid and without a contractual pact, and pinning its hopes as in the past on the support of the Jewish community.

Israel–Britain relations

Relations between Israel and Britain in the year under review were marked by the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations for the evacuation of the British base in Suez, Britain's anxiety over the deterioration of the situation on the border between Israel and Jordan, and, in the second part of the year, after the approval of the agreement with Egypt, by efforts to work out a long-term settlement between Israel and the Arab states.

Israel's efforts to use the signing of the agreement between Britain and Egypt as a means to bring about significant change in relations between itself and Britain and to obtain guarantees for its status in the Middle East were unsuccessful. Even before the initialling of the agreement on 13 July, Selwyn Lloyd, the minister of state, told the Israeli chargé d'affaires in London, Avner, of Britain's decision to reach agreement on the evacuation of its forces from Suez, and noted that the said agreement would include

46. See the telegram from the Secretary of State to certain legations of the United States in the Middle East, 21 August 1954, *FRUS, 1952-54*, Vol. IX (part 1), No. 867.

a reaffirmation of the principle of freedom of navigation in the Canal, and that they intended to leave very little military equipment behind in the base. He added that at a certain stage, almost certainly after the completion of the negotiations, the Western Powers would reaffirm the Three Power Declaration in order to make the status quo in the Middle East doubly secure. Furthermore British forces would remain in the region; their presence would help to deter aggression against Israel. In answer to a question by Avner, he added that he was authorized to state that Britain would in no circumstances tolerate Arab aggression against Israel and they would actively intervene against any such attempt.[47] On 21 September Selwyn Lloyd convened the representatives of the Arab states and handed them a declaration of British policy in the Middle East. He proclaimed Britain's desire to promote friendly ties between the Arab states and the West, and its desire to enhance the defensive capability of the Middle East and its economic development, expressed Britain's concern over the situation on the borders and stressed the need to avoid border incidents and reprisal raids. The way to resolve the problem, he said, was to conduct negotiations between the sides on the issues of contention, directly or through a third party, and Britain was ready to offer its good offices to this end. Meanwhile its policy would continue to be based on the existing treaties and commitments, including the Three Power Declaration of 1950.[48]

The next day the British Foreign Secretary Eden met with the Israeli ambassador, Eliahu Elath. Referring to the statement of Britain's readiness to make peace between Israel and the Arabs, he enumerated a number of possibilities for bringing the sides closer together, and amongst other things mentioned the possibility of exploiting the tactic that Britain and the United States had adopted in the negotiations between Italy and Yugoslavia over Trieste (secret negotiations with each of the sides separately, and bringing the results to the Security Council for approval, and not for debate.) Elath reiterated the traditional Israeli preference for direct negotiations with each state separately, without the participation of a third party. He added that Israel would be willing to examine any idea and to consider each proposal individually, but would not agree to conduct negotiations on the basis of any preconditions. In the end he asked that following the talks between them Eden should issue a similar statement to that issued by Selwyn Lloyd after his talks with the Arabs, a statement that would stress the friendship between Britain and Israel as one of the foundations of British Middle East policy,

47. See No. 285
48. See No. 374.

and would indicate Israel's willingness for direct negotiations with the Arab states.[49] In the course of the conversation Elath handed over a letter which stated that the Government of Israel wished to reach a clear agreement with the British government concerning the promises made in Lloyd's statement made to Avner on 12 July, and especially to clarify under which circumstances would the British Government consider intervening on Israel's behalf, the form such intervention would take, and what its likely dimensions would be, and whether such an action would be based on an agreed arrangement between Britain and Israel. A few days later, in a conversation with Shuckburgh, the assistant under-secretary of state at the Foreign Office, Elath was asked, in Eden's name, if Israel could propose "some icebreaking gesture" in relations with the Arabs, and for his part Shuckburgh went on to ask if Israel would be prepared to conduct negotiations with the Arabs over those territories which had been added to it beyond the partition borders. Elath replied that Israel would not agree to any territorial concession apart from mutually agreed border amendments.[50]

Israel's request for a British statement on its policy towards Israel was granted, but its contents were disappointing. On 19 October Eden sent a letter to Elath and pointed out that British Middle East policy was based on the principles of the 1950 Three Power Declaration, in particular the opposition of the three signatories to the use of force in the Middle East and agreed principles of supplying arms to the states in the region. Eden expanded on this in an answer he gave on 2 November to a Parliamentary question, in which he explained the significance of the Three Power Declaration and said that Britain would give arms only on the basis of the Declaration, namely, it would continue to maintain the balance between Israel and all of the Arab states combined, and that the Declaration obligated Britain (and also France and the United States) to come to Israel's assistance if it were attacked by an Arab state, but also to come to the aid of the Arab states if they were attacked by Israel.[51]

During November Israel tried to clarify in conversations with British representatives the exact meaning of Eden's statement in Parliament with regard to Britain's commitment to come to the assistance of Israel, and was informed that this signified military assistance, that only Britain could determine the meaning of aggression, and that it would be best for Israel to be content with the statement as it stood and to leave the issue of relations open. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs there also held an internal discussion

49. See Nos. 375, 383.
50. See No. 392.
51. See No. 454, note 1, No. 424.

about concessions that Israel was being asked to make in order to break the ice in the Middle East.[52] These clarifications did not yield decisive conclusions except for the recognition that, unlike the Americans, who had for a long time avoided making any statements or intervention in Israel-Arab relations, the British had decided to become deeply involved in the Middle East conflict and were working to stabilize the region by a permanent settlement. An indication of this was the tour of Middle Eastern states, including Israel, made in November by Evelyn Shuckburgh. In talks with the Minister of Foreign Affairs held during his visit, and with Ambassador Elath after his return, both found him to be deeply concerned about the future of the region and the West's position in it. In his conversation with Sharett he went into detail and proposed that Israel should make a breakthrough possible by agreeing in principle to the return of the refugees, on the assumption that only a few would return and the rest be compensated. In conversation with Elath he contented himself with general remarks. In neither of the two conversations did he mention even a hint about territorial concession.[53] Things became clearer in a conversation which Eban held with a senior official in the State Department. According to the official, the lesson of Shuckburgh's Middle East tour was that the main burden of stabilizing the situation in the Middle East fell on Israel which would be called upon to make territorial concessions, and in the territory it would hand over a limited number of refugees would be settled.[54] It turned out that this information was closer to the truth, and indeed Shuckburgh's report served as the basis for the discussions held in the first part of 1955 between Britain and the United States on the plan for an overall settlement between Israel and its neighbours which in the end led to the "Alpha Plan" which focused on the proposal for territorial concessions on the part of Israel and the guarantee of the Western Powers for the new borders.

Relations between Israel and France

In contrast to relations between Israel and the United States and Britain, which were strewn with difficulties and disappointments, relations between Israel and France took a turn for the better in 1954. Imperceptibly, this country began gradually to become a diplomatic support and a source for the supply of arms. At the heart of this rapprochement lay France's difficulties in North Africa that brought it into confrontation with the Arab

52. See No. 408 and note 11 there, Nos. 454, 467.
53. See Nos. 498, 565.
54. See No. 549.

League states, its exclusion from the defence organization and the system of American and British alliances in the Middle East, which seemed to it to be harmful to its interests in the Middle East and its desire to adopt an independent line in its international policy.

The signs of this change were already visible towards the end of 1953, when it became clear to Israel's representatives that their requests for various types of weapons were being met with a positive response. In the course of 1954 a number of contracts for the supply of arms, including Mystère planes, light tanks and cannons, were effectively signed. However, from the discussions on the supply of arms it turned out that the positive response came mainly from the army and the French Ministry of Defence, whereas the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which had to give the final approval for the deals, acted with greater caution and also weighed considerations connected with France's international commitments, including those in the Three Power Declaration. In spite of this, a positive attitude was discernible in the Ministry as well. The development of relations and the positive atmosphere led the embassy in Paris as early as January to entertain the notion that the time was ripe for negotiations on an overall and long-term agreement with France for the supply of arms of various types in all fields. However France made this agreement conditional on retaining its monopoly, and in the Israeli Ministry of Defence they questioned whether it was politically and practically wise to rely on a single state and source for arms.[55] Another expression of the rapprochement between the two states was the visit of the Israeli Chief of Staff Dayan as an official guest of the French Minister of Defence, Koenig and Chief of Staff Guillaume. Dayan met for talks with the commanders of the army, navy and air force and also with the director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in the ceremonial part of his visit he laid a wreath on the grave of the Unknown Soldier and was decorated with the medal of the Legion of Honour. The press highlighted the visit as a sign of rapprochement between the two countries.[56]

On 20 September a wide-ranging discussion was held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Franco-Israel relations in which the ambassador in Paris, Jacob Tsur, also participated. The ambassador reviewed what he termed "the significant strengthening of relations" between Israel and France and listed the main reasons for this turnabout: the fall of the Shishakli regime in Syria had weakened France's hold in that state, and it was seeking a fresh foothold in the region – Israel; the pressure of the army, which saw in everyone who was an enemy of the Arab League a friend of France; and the taking of

55. See No. 31 and notes there, No. 158. See also M. Bar-On, *Challenge and Quarrel* (Hebrew), pp. 118-119.
56. See Nos. 311, 328.

office by Mendès France (who became prime minister in June), which indicated a new and more independent direction in foreign policy, whilst looking for support among the small countries. Tsur suggested a positive response to the French turnabout, proposing to encourage and promote French interests in Israel, both in the cultural and the capital investment spheres, to invite political figures to visit Israel, and to encourage any independent French initiative and action with regard to Israel's political problems.[57] Until the end of the year documented in this volume, the new direction in French policy did not undergo any real tests – apart from the supply of arms – but the positive atmosphere, the special personality of the French ambassador in Israel, Pierre Gilbert, who maintained close and warm contacts with government leaders in Israel and became a strong advocate for Israel in Paris, and the knowledge that Israel had real friends, turned the relations with France into one of the few bright spots on the rather bleak political horizon.

The Soviet Union and the East European states.

During the year under review there were disturbing signs in relations with the Soviet Union. Ostensibly, everything appeared calm and in keeping with diplomatic routine. In August 1954 the level of diplomatic relations between Israel and the Soviet Union was even raised to ambassadorial level. In actual fact, with the exception of a little reciprocal trade and the exchange of delegations, there were very few two-way relations between the countries,[58] and on the issues that interested Israel there was no progress

57. See No. 373.
58. In this year the supply of fuel to Israel began, according to the agreement signed between the two states at the beginning of the year. In return the Soviet Union purchased citrus fruit from Israel. Israel sought to obtain a reciprocal trade agreement between the two states but the Russians did not respond positively. In the sphere of cultural exchanges things were laboured. Israel insisted on reciprocity and tried to reach agreement through negotiations with VOKS – the all-Soviet organisation that dealt with cultural exchanges – but was not successful. Two delegations, one from the Ministry of Agriculture headed by the Minister of Agriculture and the second one from the Student Association, went to the Soviet Union and were warmly received. The Soviets for their part sent a delegation to the congress of the Israel-Soviet Friendship League, organized by Maki and Sneh's group, to the chagrin of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which complained about the direct contact with an opposition group in Israel, not through the Ministry. In the Ministry's view cultural and delegation exchanges should be arranged at the government level between the two states. Israel refused to give entry permits to the members of the delegation, except for one of them who had a diplomatic passport. (See Nos. 327, 416, 438.)

and there was even regression. Israel was interested above all in immigration from the U.S.S.R., and the minister in Moscow, Eliashiv, tried to raise the issue immediately on presenting his credentials in December 1953. The response was negative and given in such an unequivocal manner that Eliashiv recommended abandoning the subject in its wider aspect and focusing on dealing with individual cases.[59] Sharett's conclusion was that only a high-level meeting would lead to a breakthrough in this area, and since the Soviets had for a long while refrained from high-level meetings with Israelis, the idea was mooted to use the mediation of Nahum Goldmann. Sharett proposed that Goldmann should meet with Molotov in Geneva and raise the issue in a direct fashion. However, as usual, Sharett was cautious and believed that the demand should be modest in scope – even the emigration of a thousand Jews annually would be considered an achievement, and especially if it was not confined to elderly parents but also included brothers and sisters who did not play a role of any special importance in the Soviet Union.[60] Apparently this meeting did not take place. In the absence of a political opportunity to achieve a breakthrough on the issue of emigration, Israel turned in another direction. This year Nativ, the organization that sought to strengthen contacts with the Soviet Jews, began to operate in the Soviet Union and to encourage them to emigrate to Israel. The members of this organisation operated inside the Israel embassy and belonged to its diplomatic staff, but their activity among the Jews was secret. The ambassador, Eliashiv, was not wholly in favour of this activity and still believed that a breakthrough could be achieved through diplomatic channels.[61] During 1954 only 53 Jews immigrated from the Soviet Union and from the other East European states the immigration was also very meagre.

No less disturbing were the developments on the diplomatic-political plane. During the debate in the Security Council on the Jordan River diversion work close to the Benot Yaaqov bridge, the Soviet delegation refrained from adopting a clear position, and in the final vote – it raised its hand against the Western draft resolution causing it to fail. It also cast its veto in the debate on the freedom of passage in the Suez Canal – an issue on which in the past it had supported the Israeli position. These were the first two occasions when the Soviet Union cast a veto in debates involving Israel. Sharett's conclusion about these two disturbing incidents was that the Soviet Union had begun to adopt a line of "appeasing the Arabs" designed to thwart

59. See No. 9.
60. See No. 221.
61. See Nechemia Levanon, *"Nativ" Was the Code Name* (Hebrew), p. 60.

the creation of Western defence arrangements in the Middle East.[62] From a practical standpoint Israel understood that from now on it must take into account Soviet opposition on every issue brought before the Security Council.

Contacts with the Asian States

During the year under review Israel made efforts to expand its contacts with the states of Southeast Asia, but without much success. Israel's most stable contact on this continent was that with Burma, and it was accompanied by a large degree of understanding and even warmth. Israel extended aid in the agricultural and military fields to Burma. During the year three delegations from Burma visited Israel, two of them for arms procurement, and following their visit an agreement was signed in April for the sale of Spitfire planes to Burma and for the dispatch of trainees to Israel to train as pilots and in plane maintenance. In June an official delegation of army officers and senior officials visited for a study tour, and following the visit Israel sent to Burma agricultural and military experts. The Burmese head of state Prime Minister U Nu also expressed his desire to visit Israel on a number of occasions and Sharett invited him to visit as an official guest of the Government of Israel (the visit took place in June 1955).

Israel sought to exploit its standing in Burma in order to establish ties with other states in Asia, but here the Burmese were unable to help. At the end of April and the beginning of May there took place in Colombo in Ceylon a conference of the prime ministers of the independent Asian states. The Israeli minister in Burma contacted Prime Minister U Nu before his departure and requested his intervention with Nehru in order to change India's attitude to Israel. U Nu did in fact intervene and even received a promise from Nehru that negotiations would be conducted for the establishment of relations.[63] However, this promise was one of many on this subject which were not kept. Nehru explained to Sharett that there might possibly have been some misunderstanding in the conversation he had with U Nu, and in the current situation he believed that relations between the two states at this juncture "will not serve the cause close to our hearts".[64] In any event, on 20 July the director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

62. See No. 141.
63. See No. 187.
64. Hacohen's request, and U Nu's appeal to Nehru, see Nos. 187, 204; the exchange of remarks between Sharett and Nehru, see No. 218 and note 2 there.

issued an instruction to all Israel's diplomatic representatives that in their conversations with their Indian counterparts they should not under any circumstances on their own initiative raise the question of the establishment of relations between the states, and if their interlocutors should mention this, they should listen very attentively, but not reply or encourage extension of the conversation.[65]

The question of the establishment of relations with the People's Republic of China was completely different from that with India. In this case it was China that contacted Israel to establish relations. In November 1953 the Chinese chargé d'affaires in Finland contacted his Israeli counterpart with a proposal to establish relations, and in January 1954 the Chinese ambassador in Rangoon informed the Israeli minister there of his government's desire to establish trade relations with Israel.[66] Israel responded positively to the approach made in Rangoon and suggested sending to China a delegation that would explore the opportunities for trade relations and also for the establishment of diplomatic relations. According to a view that gained acceptance in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (among its most prominent advocates were the director-general, Walter Eytan and the head of the Asia Division, Daniel Lewin), China held the key to relations with most of the Asian nations and especially with India, and it was desirable that Israel should settle its relations with it as rapidly as possible, in order to reap the fruits of gaining an early foothold and denying this advantage to the Arab states.[67] On the other hand the people in the Washington Embassy vigorously opposed this line and argued that they must avoid a rapprochement with China lest relations with the United States be affected.[68] Sharett saw the pros and cons in the two positions and at the end of May brought the issue for discussion to the Ministerial Committee for Foreign Affairs and Defence which decided to postpone the decision until after the results of the Geneva conference for Southeast Asian Affairs became known. But even after the conference ended, Sharett chose to wait and raise the matter for discussion again in the ministerial committee only after an

65. See No. 294.
66. See Nos. 48, 71,
67. See No. 212.
68. See No. 65. To what extent the Washington embassy staff were adamant in their opposition to relations with China can be seen from the incident over the vote in the session of the U.N. Assembly on the entry of the People's Republic of China into the U.N. instead of Nationalist China. The staff of the Israeli embassy headed by Eban in fact disregarded the instructions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and sided with the United States and most of the Western states against raising the issue in the Assembly debates, contrary to the instructions from Jerusalem to abstain in the voting. (See Nos. 378, 385.)

official invitation was received from the Chinese government for the despatch of the trade delegation. This invitation arrived in the middle of September, and at the beginning of November the ministerial committee approved the despatch of the delegation, when it was clear to the two sides that this step had a political significance beyond trade considerations. The delegation left for China at the end of January 1955, but by then China was no longer so interested in strengthening its relations with Israel.

The difficulties in Asia were not accidental and pointed to a clearcut trend on the part of the states on this continent. In the year under review, the prime ministers of Pakistan, India, Burma, Indonesia and Ceylon adopted two resolutions harmful to Israel's interests. The first was adopted at the conclusion of the Colombo Conference in Ceylon at the beginning of May, and the second at the conference of prime ministers held in Bogor in Indonesia at the end of December. In Colombo the resolution expressed regret at the suffering of the Arab refugees and called for their rehabilitation in their previous homes, and in Bogor it was decided not to invite Israel to the first conference of independent states in Asia and Africa due to be held in Bandung in April 1955.

Sharett in Power

At the end of March, at the height of one of the many crises that involved Israel during the year, after the slaughter in Ma'ale Aqrabim and the reprisal raid in Nahalin, Sharett hurriedly sent the following cable to Eban, explaining why the reprisal was necessary: "In the country there is depression because of the lack of response to Aqrabim, which is interpreted as weakness and failure to protect the lives of our citizens. ...In the ranks of the Party [(Mapai) there is] confusion and unease about the correctness of my course, among senior officers [there is] concealed unrest and, I fear, growing lack of confidence and no shortage of whispering...." Sharett asked Eban to display patience understanding and support. "I am facing a very complicated situation, and the considerations are intricate and demand, also on the internal front, a delicate balance."[69] This cable, which betrays no small amount of emotional turmoil, is very indicative of Sharett's position during 1954 – the year when he held the posts of prime minister and minister of foreign affairs. And indeed it is doubtful whether there has been another year in the history of the State of Israel, except perhaps for the decisive year of the establishment of the State in 1948, when the burden of

69. See No. 133.

government was concentrated, both internally and externally, on the shoulders of one man. Sharett was obliged to act in the internal, and party arenas as well as in the political and security spheres all at the same time, when in none of these areas was his path clear and the surrounding conditions were difficult.

The international arena was complex and changing, and Israel's room for manouevre in it was seriously impaired. At home the prime minister's control over the defence establishment was purely nominal. The minister of defence, Pinchas Lavon, did not enjoy the confidence of the chief of staff and the army followed an independent path and frequently acted with extremism and excessive haste. The chief of staff, Moshe Dayan, did not accept the authority of the political echelon, either of the prime minister or of the minister of defence. And in the background loomed the figure of the outgoing prime minister, Ben Gurion, who continued to forge ties and meet high ranking leaders and officers at his residence in Sede Boqer.[70]

These were the difficult conditions in which Sharett worked and even managed to register several achievements to his credit. He succeeded, amongst other things, in preventing a military operation in the demilitarized areas in the north and in Syria at the time of the internal crisis in that state in February; he tried to deal with the points of friction with Egypt by direct and indirect contacts and to bring about talks to normalize relations; he restricted the Israeli initiative to test the Egyptian boycott policy in the Suez Canal by the sending of the *Bat Galim* ship, and after it turned out that the attempt had been unsuccessful he did not hurry to send more test vessels as some of his colleagues suggested; he waged a constant struggle over the use of the reprisal weapon, preferring first to exhaust political alternatives and, when this failed, to limit the response to the attackers' home base, on a scale

70. This is how the situation in Israel was seen in the eyes of the diplomatic and military representatives of the United States in Israel: "In Israel there is a moderate leadership interested in calm and in building up the country; Sharett represents this tendency; there are other elements who favor conquering territories at Jordan's expense. These elements are found mainly in the Ministry of Defence; the Chief of Staff does not accept the authority of the Prime Minister but does Ben-Gurion's bidding. The Prime Minister is extremely concerned about extremist tendencies among the public and the army." (See Eban's telegram to Sharett, June 16 1954, 93.01/2211/11)

commensurate with the amount of damage caused to Israel.[71] But it was precisely in the political-diplomatic sphere, the field of activity most familiar to him, that Sharett did not enjoy any real successes. During the whole of the year Israel was in a defensive posture, without managing to take concerted and long-term steps that would stabilize it in the international arena, would cement its relations with the Western states and bring settlement with the Arabs closer.

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71. The reprisal raids were the subject of many discussions during the year in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the Government and other frameworks. The most exhaustive statement of Sharett was in the discussion held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on April 12 – see No. 164, note 1.

List of Documents, Editorial Notes and Main Subjects

27 21 January **G. Avner to W. Eytan**
Political effort in Great Britain.

28 22 January **Editorial Note**
Security Council vote on the draft resolution concerning the diversion of the Jordan River bed near Benot Yaaqov Bridge.

29 22 January **Editorial Note**
Statement by the U.N. Secretary-General on the question of the convocation of an Israel-Jordanian conference under Article XII.

30 22 January **A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram)**
Suggestion of an Israeli reaction to the Security Council vote on the Jordan River bed works.

31 22 January **J. Tsur to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**
Arms purchase in France.

32 23 January **A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram)**
Suggested actions following Security Council's resolution on the Jordan River bed works.

33 23 January **Sh. Eliashiv to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram)**
Cultural relations between Israel and the U.S.S.R.

34 24 January **Editorial Note**
Government's Decision on 24 January 1954 following the Security Council's resolution on the diversion of the Jordan River.

35 25 January **Note from the Israel Ambassador in Washington to the U.S. Secretary of State**
Israel's claim for reparations from East Germany.

36 25 January **A. Eban to G. Rafael (telegram)**
Israel government's reaction to the Security Council vote on the Jordan River works, significance of the Soviet veto and a recommendation to activate the Council in the matter of the Suez Canal blockade.

37 25 January **R. Shiloah to G. Rafael (telegram)**
Meeting with Johnston: regional water schemes, U.S. proposal for territorial concession on the part of Israel.

38 25 January **A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram)**
U.S. position on the status of Jerusalem.

39 26 January **A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram)**
Meeting with Hammarskjöld: resumption of Jordan River works by Israel.

40 26 January **A. Eban to W. Eytan (telegram)**
Conversation with the Indian ambassador to the U.S.: Israel-India relations in view of U.S. arms supply to Pakistan.

71	17 February	**D. Hacohen to A. Levavi** Conversation with the Chinese ambassador in Burma on commercial relations between China and Israel.
72	18 February	**Ch. Yahil to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** Meeting with the Austrian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Kreisky: reparations and compensation from Austria, Israel-Austria relations.
73	18 February	**A. Eban to the Secretary-General of the U.N.** Conference with Jordan according to Article XII.
74	18 February	**D. Hammarskjöld to A. Eban** Invitation to conference with Jordan according to Article XII.
75	18 February	**Consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** Discussion of a possible military action in Lake Tiberias.
76	18 February	**W. Eytan to I.J. Linton** Question of Israel's relations with Spain.
77	19 February	**Ch. Yahil to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** Attendance of an Israeli representative at the Berlin Conference: Israel's claims from East Germany.
78	19 February	**G. Rafael to A. Eban (telegram)** Instructions for a meeting with Azmi: Israel-Egypt relations, Israel's complaint to the Security Council on the Suez Canal blockade.
79	20 February	**A. Eban to G. Rafael (telegram)** Meeting with Azmi: Suez Canal blockade.
80	21 February	**A. Shalev to Major-General V. Bennike** Syrian interference with Israeli fishing in Lake Tiberias.
81	21 February	**M. Sharett to G. Avner** Transfer of liaison with the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization from the I.D.F. to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
82	21 February	**G. Rafael to the Minister of Foreign Affairs** Resumé of steps taken following the events in Syria.
83	22 February	**J. Tsur to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram)** French position in the Security Council debate on the Suez Canal blockade.
84	23 February	**M. Kidron to A.R. Perry** Suggested draft resolution by Israel on the Suez Canal debate in the Security Council.
85	23 February	**A. Eban to W. Bedell Smith** Request that the U.S. sponsor a draft resolution in the Suez Canal debate, Israel-Egypt relations.

86 | 23 February | **Consultation in the Prime Minister's Bureau**
Conference with Jordan according to Article XII.

87 | 23 February | **A. Moore to A. Lourie**
Britain's responsibilities under the Anglo-Jordanian treaty.

88 | 24 February | **R. Shiloah to the United States Division (telegram)**
Eban's conversation with Bedell Smith: the Suez Canal blockade, Middle East defence.

89 | 26 February | **A. Eban to H. Hoppenot**
Freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal.

90 | 26 February | **M. Kidron to W. Borberg**
Egyptian proposal to argue the juridical aspects of the Suez Canal question.

91 | 26 February | **R. Shiloah to G. Rafael (telegram)**
Meeting with the Egyptian representative to the U.N. Azmi: Israel's readiness to secret and official conversations on a solution of the Suez Canal blockade.

92 | 26 February | **D. Hacohen to A. Levavi**
Israel–Burma relations.

93 | | **Editorial Note**
Military Coup in Syria.

94 | 27 February | **M. Sharett to A. Eban and R. Shiloah (telegram)**
Considerations of preemptive military action in the Syrian Demilitarized Zone.

95 | 1 March | **A. Eban to G. Rafael (telegram)**
Repercussions of Soviet veto in the Security Council on the Council's standing in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

96 | 1 March | **E. Sasson to A. Eban**
Conference with Jordan according to Article XII.

97 | 2 March | **Z. Shek to the Minister of Foreign Affairs**
Resumé of a discussion in the minister's bureau on Arab states' rearmament and the Middle East defence.

98 | 4 March | **M. Sharett to A. Eban (telegram)**
Suez Canal and the Gulf of Eilat blockade.

99 | 4 March | **A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram)**
Congressmen's meeting with Bedell Smith and Byroade: rearmament of Arab states.

100 | 6 March | **A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram)**
Congressmen's meeting with Bedell Smith and Byroade: rearmament of Arab states.

170	13 April	**E. Elath to W.S. Churchill** Submission of a message from the Prime Minister: Israel-Britain relations in view of the incidents along the Israel-Jordan border.
171	14 April	**W. Eytan to A. Eban (telegram)** A message to Egypt and American activity re a high-level Israel-Egypt meeting.
172	15 April	**E. Elath to A. Lourie (telegram)** Dulles-Eden meeting in London: Israel-Jordan relations, Local Commanders' Agreement.
173	15 April	**Z. Argaman to the East European Division (telegram)** Arrest and trial of Zionist leaders in Romania.
174	17 April	**A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram)** Meeting with Byroade: Security Council debate, U.S. Grant-in-Aid, supply of jet fighters, Byroade speech on the connection between American Jews and Israel.
175	19 April	**M. Sharett to E. Elath (telegram)** Comments on Dulles-Eden agreement in their London talks to improve Israel-Jordan relations and the situation along the borders.
176	19 April	**Ch. Herzog to the Intelligence Branch, I.D.F. (telegram)** Meeting with the Egyptian military attaché in Washington: Egypt's intentions to pacify its border with Israel.
177	19 April	**G. Rafael to A. Eban and R. Shiloah (telegram)** Rafael and Tekoah's meetings with Russell: arrangement and agenda for the impending meeting between Israeli and Egyptian officers.
178	20 April	**G. Rafael to A. Eban (telegram)** Rafael and Tekoah's meetings with Russell: Israel's policy, situation along the borders, compensation of Arab refugees, Johnston scheme.
179	20 April	**Major-General V. Bennike to M. Sharett** Request that Israel return to the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission.
180	20 April	**M. Sharett to Major-General V. Bennike** Claim voiced by the Chairman of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission that the perpetrators of the Ma'ale Aqrabim incidents were "Jewish terrorists".
181	20 April	**Sh. Eliashiv to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram)** Meeting with Zorin: U.S.S.R. position in the Security Council's debate on the situation along the Israel-Jordan border.
182	21 April	**E. Ben-Horin to the United States Division** Meeting with Jernegan: Security Council's sub-committee to discuss the situation along the Israel-Jordan border.

183	22 April	**A. Eban to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram)** Meeting with the U.N. Secretary-General: resumption of works in the Jordan River bed.
184	22 April	**Y. Tekoah to the Minister of Foreign Affairs** I.D.F. line with regard to the renewal of Local Commanders' Agreement.
185	22 April	**Ch. Herzog to the Israel Ambassador in Washington** Disagreement with Israel's line regarding military assistance to the Middle East.
186	22 April	**Major-General V. Bennike to the Prime Minister** Claim by the Chairman of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission that "Jewish terrorists" were responsible for the Ma'ale Aqrabim incident.
187	23 April	**D. Hacohen to D. Lewin** Meeting with U Nu, prime minister of Burma: Israel's relations with Asia.
188	25 April	**A. Eban to M. Sharett and E. Elath (telegram)** Israel's campaign against Arab rearmament.
189	25 April	**Sh. Eliashiv to the East European Division** Eliashiv's difficulties in presenting Israel's position in the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
190	26 April	**Y. Tekoah to the Minister of Foreign Affairs** Resumption of works in the Jordan River bed.
191	26 April	**A. Eban to M. Sharett and L. Eshkol (telegram)** Increase of the Grant-in-Aid to Israel for the budget year 1953/54, Grant-in-Aid for 1954/55.
192	27 April	**R. Shiloah to the United States Division (telegram)** Eban's meeting with Byroade: U.S. arms supply to Iraq.
193	27 April	**M. Sharett to Major-General V. Bennike** Claim by the Chairman of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission that "Jewish terrorists" were responsible for the Ma'ale Aqrabim incident.
194	29 April	**Note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the U.S.S.R Legation in Tel Aviv** Elevation of the level of diplomatic representation between Israel and the U.S.S.R to the level of embassies.
195	29 April	**M. Sharett to A. Eban (telegram)** Suggestion to withdraw Israel's complaint to the Security Council on the situation along the Israel-Jordan border.
196	30 April	**R. Shiloah to the United States Division (telegram)** Eban and Shiloah's meeting with Johnston: Regional water schemes.
197	3 May	**R. Shiloah to M. Sharett (telegram)** Suggestion for a new peace initiative by Israel.

224 25 May **R. Shiloah to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram)**
Eban's meeting with Byroade: Israel's distress at the U.S. military assistance to Iraq, Israel's participation in the Middle East defence.

225 25 May **A. Eban to M. Sharett**
U.S. policy in the Middle East.

226 25 May **Aide Mémoire by the Palestine Conciliation Commission to the Permanent Representative of Israel to the U.N.**
Release of the Arab refugees blocked accounts.

227 27 May **East European Division to the Israel Legation in Bucharest (telegram)**
Arrest of Zionist activists in Romania.

228 29 May **A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram)**
Meeting with Lehman: deterioration in the confidence of Israel's friends in the U.S. in the Israeli government.

229 30 May **W. Eytan to the Israel Missions Abroad (telegram)**
Briefing for public relations campaign following Jordan's refusal to commit itself to Article 35 of the U.N. Charter.

230 30 May **Political Consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**
U.S.-Israel relations.

231 31 May **W. Eytan to the Israel Missions Abroad.**
Relations between Israel and the People's Republic of China.

232 31 May **Israel Embassy in Washington to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (telegram)**
Eban's meeting with Johnston: Israel's concern in view of U.S. support of the Arab water schemes, regional water schemes.

233 1 June **M. Sharett to the Israel Embassy in Washington (telegram)**
Arguments for a meeting re Israel's incorporation in the regional defence system in the Middle East and military assistance to Israel.

234 [1] June **A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram)**
Meeting with Dean and Zelerbach: Israel-U.S. relations.

235 1 June **A. Eban to W. Eytan (telegram)**
Meeting with the Emperor of Ethiopia: Israel-Ethiopia relations.

236 2 June **E. Najar to the Israel Consul in Vienna**
Israel-Austria relations, reparations agreement with Germany.

237 4 June **A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram)**
Meeting with the Turkish Prime Minister Menderes: Turkey and the Middle East defence

238 4 June **D. Laor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram)**
Arrest of Zionist activists in Romania, emigration from Romania.

308 2 August **M. Sharett to A. Eban (telegram)**
Further instructions to the meeting with Dulles: the Anglo-Egyptian agreement.

309 3 August **M. Sharett to A. Eban (telegram)**
Further instructions for the meeting with Dulles: Anglo-Egyptian agreement and the security of Israel.

310 3 August **Consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**
Political and military implications of the Anglo-Egyptian agreement.

311 3 August **Decisions taken at a Meeting at the Ministry of Defence**
Instructions to the chief of staff for his visit to France.

312 4 August **Y. Tekoah to G. Rafael**
Implications of the Anglo-Egyptian agreement.

313 4 August **A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram)**
Meeting with Dulles: Israel-U.S. relations, changes in the balance of power in the Middle East, proposal to issue a public statement by Dulles to reassure Israel.

314 4 August **A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram)**
Suggestions for a further talk with Dulles: reassuring statement, balance of power in the Middle East.

315 4 August **M. Avidan to the East European Division (telegram)**
Meeting with Sluczanski: breaches of diplomatic practices by the Israeli diplomats in Poland.

316 4 August **M. Sharett to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**
Proposal to establish diplomatic relations with China.

317 5 August **M. Sharett to A. Eban (telegram)**
Instructions for Eban's meeting with Bedell Smith and Dulles: impropriety of supplying the Arab states with arms.

318 5 August **G. Rafael and Sh. Divon to the Minister of Foreign Affairs**
Israel's policy following the Anglo-Egyptian agreement.

319 5 August **Sh. Eliashiv to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram)**
Conversation with Vyshinsky: Western Powers defence arrangement in the Middle East, Israel's position the Middle East, tasks of the U.N.

320 6 August **M. Sharett to A. Eban (telegram)**
Instructions for meeting with Dulles: substance of the American reassuring statement, avoidance of vague and verbal assurances.

321 7 August **A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram)**
Eban's meeting with Dulles: Dulles's proposals to exchange Notes in order to reassure Israel about U.S. policy in the Middle East.

433	25 October	**R. Shiloah to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram)** Blaustein's meeting with Mahmud Riad: relations between Israel and Egypt, Riad's suggestion to compensate the Arab refugees and to make Israeli territorial concessions in the Negev; Riad's suggestion that Blaustein visit Cairo.
434	26 October	**W. Eytan to the Israel Embassies in Washington, London and Paris (telegram)** Instructions to make supreme efforts to save the Cairo prisoners.
435	26 October	**W. Eytan to the Israel Ambassador in London (telegram)** Instructions to initiate public action in favour of the prisoners in Egypt.
436	26 October	**J. Tsur to the West European Division (telegram)** Meeting with Maillard: French demand that Israel refrain from statements about the improvement of Israel-French relations.
437	26 October	**J. Tsur to the West European Division** Peres's talks in France on arms purchase and financing.
438	26 October	**Sh. Bentsur to the Minister of Foreign Affairs** Soviet protest against Israel's refusal to grant entry visas to the Soviet delegation to the U.S.S.R.-Israel Friendship Congress.
439	26 October	**A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram)** The U.S. government considers Israel responsible for the propaganda campaign against it because of its Middle East policy.
440	27 October	**A. Eban to M. Sharett** Secret and private meeting between Dulles and Eban: informal warning to Israel concerning the Israeli embassy's interference in American internal affairs.
441	27 October	**Consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** Johnston's request to send an American survey group to investigate the possibility of using Lake Tiberias as a regional water reservoir.
442	27 October	**A. Eban to the President of the Security Council** Request by Israel to resume the Security Council debate on the freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal.
443	29 October	**A. Eban to J.F. Dulles** Israel's security problem and the resumption of the talks on a political statement in favour of Israel.
444	29 October	**J. Tsur to the West European Division** Talk with the delegation of the American Jewish Committee on the future of North African Jews.

458	5 November	**M. Leshem to the Asia Division** Meeting with the Chinese ambassador in Burma: Israel's vote in the U.N. on the question of Chinese representation in the U.N.
459	7 November	**G. Rafael to M. Sharett (telegram)** Blaustein's mediation mission to Egypt and Cairo's reluctance to receive him.
460	8 November	**Israel Embassy in Washington to the United States Division. (telegram)** American efforts in Cairo and Tel Aviv to pacify the Israel-Egypt border.
461	8 November	**E. Elath to M. Sharett (telegram)** A proposal to request a British military guarantee to protect Israel.
462	8 November	**E. Elath to W. Eytan (telegram)** The role of the Congress of Palestinian Refugees in the release of the refugees' blocked accounts.
463	9 November	**M. Kidron to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram)** Agenda of the Security Council's meeting on the *Bat Galim* affair.
464	9 November	**A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram)** Proposal to send a tanker flying a foreign flag through the Suez Canal as a test ship.
465	9 November	**M. Kidron to W. Eytan (telegram)** Latin American initiative to raise the Jerusalem issue in the Security Council.
466	10 November	**Consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** Proposals to send further ships through the Suez Canal to test Egyptian intentions.
467	10 November	**E. Elath to A. Lourie (telegram)** Meeting with Turton: Britain's obligation to aid Israel according to the Three Power Declaration and Eden's parliamentary statement.
468	10 November	**J. Tsur to W. Eytan (telegram)** Report on Nasser's intentions with regard to the sabotage group prisoners.
469	11 November	**Consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** Release of Arab refugees' blocked accounts.
470	11 November	**M. Sharett to E. Elath (telegram)** Instruction for the forthcoming meeting with Eden: doubts over Elath's proposals for British guarantee, clarifications of Eden's parliamentary statement.
471	12 November	**M. Tov to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram)** Latin American initiative to raise the question of Jerusalem in the U.N.

513 2 December **A. Lourie to E. Elath (telegram)**
Meeting with Moore: British approach in Amman and Jerusalem to exercise restraint following recent incidents, *Bat Galim*, Shuckburgh's visit to Israel.

514 2 December **J. Tsur to M. Sharett (telegram)**
Efforts to save the prisoners in Egypt.

515 3 December **Major-General E.L.M. Burns to Rav Aluf M. Dayan**
Draft of a Local Commanders' Agreement in Jerusalem.

516 3 December **M. Kidron to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**
Draft suggested by the Israel mission to the U.N. to sum up the Security Council debate on the *Bat Galim* affair.

517 3 December **Israel Embassy in Paris to the West European Division (telegram)**
Bendor's meeting with Maillard: *Bat Galim*, Jerusalem, arms purchase.

518 3 December **W. Eytan to A. Eban and R. Shiloah (telegram)**
Instruction to activate the U.S. ambassador in Egypt in view of the opening of the trial of the sabotage group prisoners.

519 4 December **M. Kidron to G. Rafael (telegram)**
Egyptian decision to release the crew and the cargo of the *Bat Galim*.

520 4 December **A. Eban to the United States Division (telegram)**
Recommendation to proceed with the negotiations with the U.S. on drafting a pro-Israeli statement.

521 6 December **J. Herzog to the Israel Ambassador in Washington**
Differences between the attitudes of the three Western Powers concerning the rearmament of the Arab states and the organization of the regional defence.

522 6 December **A. Eban to H.E. Stassen**
Request to increase the American Grant-in-Aid.

523 7 December **M. Kidron to G. Rafael (telegram)**
Security Council debate on the *Bat Galim* episode and proposals by the Israel mission to the U.N. as to how to proceed with the efforts to release the vessel.

524 7 December **M. Sharett to the Israel Embassy in London (telegram)**
Israel's objections to the southward release of the *Bat Galim*.

525 7 December **Y. Shimoni to J. Herzog**
Controversy between Shimoni and Herzog concerning the use of Lake Tiberias as a reservoir and the question of international supervision in Johnston's water scheme.

526 7 December **D. Avni to G. Rafael (telegram)**
Meeting with Okasha, Egyptian military attaché in Paris: Israel-Egypt relations.

527	8 December	**Y. Tekoah to the Minister of Foreign Affairs** Local Commanders' Agreement in Jerusalem.
528	8 December	**A. Eban to G. Rafael (telegram)** U.S.'s intentions with regard to the U.N. handling of the *Bat Galim* affair.
529	8 December	**M. Sharett to J. Tsur (telegram)** Directives to Tsur's meeting with Mendès France: France-Israel relations, rearmament of Arab states, Jews in North Africa, extension of the Alliance between Turkey and Pakistan.
530	9 December	**M. Sharett to A. Eban (telegram)** Calls for U.S. efforts in Cairo to prevent death sentences in the trial of the Egyptian prisoners.
531	9 December	**A. Eban to M. Sharett** Meeting with Murphey: *Bat Galim*, request for an American effort to save the Cairo prisoners.
532	9 December	**Y. Tekoah to the Minister of Foreign Affairs** Recommendation for steps to be taken in view of an imminent Egyptian statement about the release of the *Bat Galim*.
533	10 December	**Rav Aluf M. Dayan to Major-General E.L.M. Burns** Jordan's objection to the Local Commanders' Agreement in Jerusalem and Israel's proposal for a substitute agreement.
534	10 December	**Rav Aluf M. Dayan to Major-General E.L.M. Burns** Controversy with regard to U.N. Observers' patrols and the establishment of observation points along the Jerusalem demarcation line.
535	10 December	**J. Tsur to the Prime Minister (telegram)** Meeting with Mendès France: relations between Israel and France, balance of power in the Middle East, Cairo trial, freedom of navigation, North African Jews.
536	11 December	**Editorial Note** Opening of the trial of the Israel sabotage network in Egypt.
537	13 December	**W. Eytan to the Israel Embassy in London** Supply of Iranian oil to Israel.
538	13 December	**R. Shiloah to J. Herzog** Survey of Israel-U.S. relations: secretary of state decision to reassess U.S. policy in the Middle East, suggestion of Israeli concession to forestall American pressure on Israel.
539	13 December	**W. Eytan to the Israel Embassies in Washington, London and Paris (telegram)** Instructions to mount a campaign about the trial in Cairo.
540	14 December	**M. Sharett to the Israel Embassy in Washington (telegram)** Instructions to mount a campaign about the trial in Cairo.

541 14 December **M. Sharett to A. Eban (telegram)**
Instruction to activate the U.S. to help the Jewish prisoners in Cairo.

542 15 December **M. Sharett to M. Orbach**
Briefing for Orbach before his Cairo visit: Cairo trial, Israel-Egypt relations, suggestions to relieve the tension.

543 15 December **A. Eban to W. Eytan (telegram)**
Blaustein's efforts and the State Department activities to assist in the matter of the Cairo prisoners.

544 15 December **Sh. Kaddar to the East European Division (telegram)**
Meeting with the Czechoslovak minister of foreign affairs: Release of Oren, reunification of families, commercial relations.

545 16 December **E. Sasson to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (telegram)**
Meeting with Astorre Mayer, Israel's consul in Milan: Cairo trial.

546 16 December **J. Tsur to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**
Rafael and Divon's meetings with Maillard: French policy in the Middle East, French attitude to the proposal to renew the Three Power Declaration.

547 17 December **Meeting: M. Sharett – I. White**
Department of State position with regard to free navigation in the Suez Canal, Department's efforts to release the *Bat Galim*.

548 17 December **Y. Shimoni to W. Eytan**
Report from Cairo through the U.S. embassy on the Cairo trial.

549 17 December **A. Eban to M. Sharett and J. Herzog (telegram)**
Information from Department of State sources about Shuckburgh mission to the Middle East, secretary of state proposal on U.S. declaration with regard to Israel.

550 17 December **A. Eban to M. Sharett (telegram)**
Meeting with Hoover of the Department of State: U.S. declaration on Israel, balance of power in the Middle East, suggestions to improve Israel-Arab relations.

551 17 December **United State Division to the Israel Embassy in Washington (telegram)**
U.S. objections to the dispatch of an Israeli trade delegation to China.

552 17 December **D. Lewin to D. Hacohen**
U.S. objections to the dispatch of an Israeli trade delegation to China.

580 31 December **Note from the Israel Ambassador in Washington to the U.S. Secretary of State**
Israel's objection to U.S. arms shipments to Iraq.

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93. *Record Group: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel's Missions Abroad*
    - 93.01 – Coded telegrams – Israel missions abroad
    - 93.02 – Paris
    - 93.03 – Israel's mission to the U.N. and the consulate-general in New York
    - 93.04 – London
    - 93.08 – Washington
    - 93.13 – Rangoon

130. *Record Group: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Head Office*
    - 130.02 – Bureau of the Minister and the Director-General
    - 130.03 – Division of International Organizations
    - 130.09 – Coded telegrams
    - 130.10 – West European Division
    - 130.11 – East European Division
    - 130.13 – British Commonwealth Division
    - 130.14 – Asia and Africa Division
    - 130.15 – Middle East Division
    - 130.16 – Cease-fire Division
    - 130.19 – Personal deposits of Ministry of Foreign Affairs personnel
    - 130.20 – United States Division

Ben-Gurion Archives

Central Zionist Archives (Abbreviated reference: CZA)
A245 – Moshe Sharett papers

President Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas
Papers of Secretary of State J.F. Dulles

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FO371 – Foreign Office files, general political correspondence

Abbreviations used in Editorial Headings and References

IDF – Israel Defence Forces
Inc. – Incoming text
MFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Orig. – Original
Outg. – Outgoing text
Tel. – Telegram

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(This list contains the names of books and publications mentioned in the notes, in the Editorial Notes, and in the Introduction)

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Levanon, Nechemia, *"Nativ" Was the Code Name*, (Hebrew), Tel Aviv 1995

Ian Black and Benny Morris, *Israel's Secret Wars, A History of Israel's Intelligence Services*, New York 1991

NOTES
AND SUMMARIES OF
HEBREW DOCUMENTS

1. Israel Embassy in London to W. Eytan. 1 January 1954

Notes

1. Note dated 27 November 1953 in which Israel requested Britain to include assurances and practical steps in the agreement being negotiated with Egypt about the withdrawal of British troops from the Suez Canal Zone, in order to ensure that Israeli security interests would not be adversely affected, and that freedom of passage through the Suez Canal would be guaranteed – see Vol. 8, No. 543.
2. Note dated 30 October 1953 (File 130.02/2409/11) in reply to the Israeli Note of 14 October 1953. For the main points of the Note and the discussion at the time it was submitted, see Vol. 8, No. 483. See also No. 423.
3. The Three Power Declaration of the Western powers dated 25 May 1950 concerning their undertaking to prevent the development of an arms race between the Arab countries and Israel and to take action against use of force, or the threat of such use, between the countries of the region. See Vol. 5, No. 248.
4. The complete Note, dated 29 December 1953, is filed under 93.04/41/4.
5. In the course of the debate in the House of Commons on 17 December 1953 concerning British foreign policy, Attlee, the leader of the opposition, expressed his support of the negotiations with Egypt, but demanded the assurance that Egypt would not close the Suez Canal whenever it was inclined to do so. He warned of the danger that the withdrawal of British forces would disproportionately increase the power of "one of the Middle Eastern states." Referring to Israel's concerns, he proposed to reaffirm the 1950 Three Power Declaration, the consequence of which was strengthening military forces in the area.
6. See Elath to Eytan and Avner to Eytan, 24 December 1953, 130.02/2419/1. Avner requested the Ministry's directives for practical steps to be taken following the signing of the agreement should it not contain guarantees for Israel's security.
7. Eytan replied that they intended to submit a Note on the basis of the arguments they had used up till now, that would express Israel's disappointment, but would not require a further reply. They were also preparing a number of new demands. (See his telegram No. 951, 4 January 1954, 130.09/2319/4.) Cf. No. 26.

2. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the United States Division. 2 January 1954

Coded Tel. WNTA64; Outg.: 93.01/2210/1

Summary

Shiloah met with Jernigan, at the latter's request. Jernigan apologized for inconveniencing Shiloah on a Sabbath, and then told him that the United States was in receipt of information that the Jordanians were about to advise the secretary-general of the United Nations that they refused to participate in

a conference under Article XII, and proposed instead discussions under Article XI.[1] This step had been recommended by the Arab League.[2] The United States had made efforts to persuade the Jordanians and other Arab states to change their minds, but to no avail. The United States has not yet decided on its final position, but the tendency is to take advantage of the Arabs' agreement to talk under Article XI, as the lesser evil in the circumstances. After all, the object is not to exploit a particular Article, but to have the two governments meet to discuss the implementation of the Armistice Agreement. Jernigan stressed that his recommendation was at the moment in the nature of preliminary thoughts only.

Shiloah replied that he did not yet know his government's position, but he personally was astounded by the readiness of the government of the United States to yield to the Arab proposal. This attitude would encourage the Arab states and, in effect, other countries as well, to repudiate international agreements. If he were in the U.N. secretary-general's place, he would ignore the Arabs' refusal and announce the date and venue of the conference. Further on, Jernigan agreed that the United States should be more circumspect in its future talks with the Arabs. It is of course understood that, should Israel adhere to its position, the United States would presumably support it in the Security Council, but nevertheless he recommends that Israel take into consideration the Jordanian proposal. Shiloah promised to transmit his recommendations to the Israeli government.[4]

Notes

1. Article XII of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement states that each of the parties is entitled to demand that the U.N. secretary-general convene a conference of both parties to review, revise or suspend any of the provisions of the Armistice Agreement (except Articles I and III). Participation in this conference will be compulsory for both parties. Article XI of that agreement assigned the implementation of the agreement to the Mixed Armistice Commission, and gave it the right of decision in case of dispute over the interpretation of a particular provision in the agreement and empowered it, as it deemed fit and according to requirements, to recommend from time to time to both parties to modify the provisions of the agreement. (See Vol. 3, Appendix H).

   In November 1953, Israel requested the U.N. secretary-general, to convene the conference according to Article XII following the Qibya incident and the subsequent deliberations in the Security Council – see Vol. 8, No. 531. See also No. 3.
2. The reference is to deliberations of the sub-committee of the Arab League political committee, convened on 27 December 1953 to discuss the Israeli proposal to call a conference in accordance with Article XII of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement. For details of the deliberations in the sub-committee see File 130.02/2451/10.

3. Reference is to the support of the authority of General Bennike, Chief of Staff of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization, concerning the diversion of the Jordan River near the Benot Yaaqov Bridge – see No. 4, n. 1, No. 11, n. 1.
4. For the reaction of the M.F.A., see No. 3, notes 3 and 4 and No. 5. Cf. also the summary of the meeting in *FRUS, 1952-54,* Vol. IX (part 1), No. 760.

3. M. Kidron (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 4 January 1954

Coded Tel. 306; Outg.: 93.01/2181/8

Summary

Kidron reports on his meeting with Hammarskjöld, who informed him of Jordan's reply: they refuse to hold talks under Article XII and propose instead to meet under Article XI.[1] It is clear that the Arab states are apprehensive about Jordan's meeting with Israel face-to-face, because they know that Israel's goal is a permanent settlement of the conflict. Hammarskjöld prefers not to see the Jordanian refusal as the end of the matter. He has a common cause with Israel to bring the Jordanians to the conference table. He knows that his obligation is to convene the conference, and Article XI is irrelevant. He must find a way to arrange the meeting without worsening the relations. He will make a further effort and will approach the Jordanians again. In order to lend weight to what he will say to them, he is considering making a statement to that effect at the next meeting of the Security Council.

Kidron replied that Jordan has adopted delaying tactics and meanwhile the situation on the borders is deteriorating. The Government of Israel views the Jordanian refusal with gravity and is contemplating denouncing Jordan for a manifest breach of the Armistice Agreement. Hammarskjöld requested that Israel refrain from doing so for the time being. He understands that the matter is urgent and he will do his utmost to reach the common objective. He will inform Israel on the following day of the steps he is planning to take.[2]

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in consultation with Shiloah, has decided to postpone its announcement until the Jordanian reply has been published, when the reaction will be as follows: (1) Quoting the secretary-general that he did not consider Jordan's refusal as the end of the matter. (2) Stressing that participation in the conference is obligatory, and referring those asking for further information to Hammarskjöld. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' telegram No. 767 has in the meantime arrived.[3] In view of Hammarskjöld's

statement, it is doubtful whether the letter proposed by the Ministry is now relevant.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 2 and n. 1. Jordan replied to Israel's requests through Hammarskjöld that deliberations on the method of implementation of articles of the Armistice Agreement, clarification of parts of them, or the introduction of amendments are to take place in the Mixed Armistice Commission in accordance with Article XI of the Agreement. (See Jordanian foreign minister's telegram to Hammarskjöld, 4 January 1954, 93.03/3007/5.)
2. In his reply to the Jordanian foreign minister, cabled on 5 January, Hammarskjöld stated that the wording of Article XII, clause 3, according to which he invited the Jordanians to the conference is mandatory and the positions Jordan had taken in its reply did not release him from his obligation to convene the conference at the request of one of the parties. The conference agenda was to be restricted to concrete issues arising from the implementation of the Armistice Agreement. He promised that he would consider positively the proposal that the U.N. would assist in running the conference, whether by himself or by his personal representative. (Filed under 93.03/3007/5.)
3. Gideon Rafael cabled instructions following consultation with the minister of foreign affairs: (1) The ambassador should apply once again to the U.N. secretary-general demanding the convening of the conference, and should inform him of Israel's readiness to meet in New York, and of its agreement that the secretary-general's personal representative should participate in the first, procedural, stage. (2) In the event that Jordan should continue its refusal to participate in the conference, a complaint should be submitted to the Security Council. (See telegram 767, 4 January 1954, 130.16/2948/6.)
4. A letter such as proposed in note 3 above was not sent. For Israel's public reaction see No. 5 and n. 2.

4. Sh. Bendor [Jerusalem] to M. Sharett. 4 January 1954

Orig.: 130.20/2475/1

Summary

With a year having passed since the inauguration of the new Administration in the United States, Bendor wishes to analyse its attitude towards Israel and the Arabs. The Administration made a public statement to the effect that its intention was to appease the Arabs, and acknowledged that Israel had been more favoured in the past. The appeasement was carried out at Israel's

expense, notably by the delay in confirming the Grant-in-Aid,[1] and the refusal to grant Israel a loan for consolidation of its debt.[2] This policy brought only negative results. Arab enmity towards Israel increased, and they had taken steps they would not have permitted themselves to take previously. Among other things, the blockade of the Suez Canal had been tightened,[3] the trade boycott against Israel intensified, and now came the refusal to participate in a conference under Article XII.[4] Nor has the Arab enmity against the United States lessened – in the United Nations they voted against America or abstained, and they refused to participate in any plan for the defence of the Middle East. In short, they learned that if the United States "confessed" to its guilt it was easy to extort from it additional concessions in order to be "placated." The conclusion from this is that efforts should again be made to prove to the United States that its present policy will only aggravate the situation in the region.

Notes

1. The United States had delayed the release of the monies of the Grant-in-Aid funds in September 1953 because of Israel's non compliance with the instructions of the Chief of Staff of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization to cease the work on the diversion of the Jordan River. Funds were released only on 4 November after Israel announced cessation of the work – see Vol. 8, Nos. 475 and 493.
2. In July 1953 the United States announced that it would not allow the Export-Import Bank to grant a loan to Israel as consolidation of its short-term loans – see Vol. 8, No. 304 and n. 1.
3. At the end of November 1953, the Egyptian government decided once again to augment the boycott regulations in the Suez Canal and to add food products and other goods to the list of prohibited goods that would be impounded in Egyptian ports from vessels headed for Israel. The regulations were published in the Egyptian official gazette on 7 December 1953. Unofficially it was decided that these regulations would apply not only to the Suez Canal but also to the straits of Eilat. (See Sh. Ya'ari to the Israeli missions abroad, 22 December 1953, 130.02/2419/1.) The 1950 boycott regulations, by definition, aimed to prevent the smuggling of military equipment into Israel, but already in August 1953 the Egyptians had added cotton and vehicle parts to the list.
4. See Nos. 2 and 3.

5. W. Eytan [Jerusalem] to the Israel Embassies in Paris and London. 5 January 1954

Coded Tel. 356 (London); Outg.: 30.09/2419/4

Summary

Eytan instructs the embassies in Paris and London to publish an official reaction to Jordan's reply.[1] This reply is a violation of the Armistice Agreement. Article XII would not have been included in the Agreement if Article XI had sufficed. Article XI deals with the Mixed Armistice Commission, and it was the failure of the latter that had brought about the demand for a conference under Article XII, with the aim of rectifying the Commission's errors. In view of Jordan's reply, Israel will have to consider the possibility of denouncing Jordan formally for its violation of the Armistice Agreement and to discuss with the United Nations the steps to be taken in order to restore tranquillity to the borders.

In addition to this announcement, the Quai d'Orsay and the Foreign Office should be approached with expressions of Israel's disappointment at Jordan's response, as outlined above, and they should be informed that Israel will request the secretary-general of the United Nations to convene the conference nevertheless, as he is bound to do, and Israel assumes that he will indeed take this step.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 3.
2. Publication of Israel's reaction was delayed – see No. 12. In a further telegram Eytan instructed the ambassadors in Paris and London to exploit the opportunity of the announcement of Israel's reaction to protest the proposal Bennike had received from the U.N. jurists not to censure single acts of infiltration as violation of the Armistice Agreement. This attitude is contrary to precedents, to Bennike's replies during the Security Council debates and to its resolutions on the Qibya operation. (See Eytan to the Israel embassies in Paris and London, telegram 353, 5 January 1954, 130.09/2345/5.)

6. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 5 January 1954

Notes

1. Security Council Resolution of 1 September 1951 calling upon Egypt to end restrictions on commercial shipping in the Suez Canal, irrespective of its destination.
2. On 1 January 1954 the Egyptians fired on an Italian vessel *Maria Antonia* carrying meat, forcing it to stop as it was about to enter the Straits of Eilat. The ship was compelled to return.
3. On 14 December 1953 the Egyptians confiscated a cargo of meat carried by the Italian vessel *Franca Maria*. The ship was on its way from Eritrea to Haifa and the cargo was destined for Israel. Israel submitted a complaint on this matter to the Security Council and the cargo was released in January 1954. See also No. 62.
4. The continuation of the Security Council debate on the diversion of the Jordan River by Israel near the Benot Yaaqov Bridge – see No. 11.
5. See No. 1 and n. 1.

7. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 5 January 1954

Coded Tel. TNWA330; Outg.: 130.09/2310/5

Summary

It has been decided, in consultation with the minister of foreign affairs, to resume immediately the campaign against the supply of arms to the Arab states. The press, the Jewish organizations and Members of Congress should be enlisted to help in this campaign, and the Department of State should also be approached.

The Arabs should not be supplied with armaments as long as peace has not been attained. America's policy of appeasement has not mitigated the Arabs' demands. Quite the contrary, the Suez Canal blockade has been tightened,[1] and Egypt together with Iraq has been exerting pressure on Jordan to violate the Armistice Agreement.[2] The contrast between the delay in confirming the grant to Israel[3] and the eagerness to supply Egypt and Iraq with arms, in spite of their having defied the United Nations, is striking. The submission of the complaint to the Security Council[4] will also be of help in this campaign.

The embassy is requested to cable reports on its activity.[5]

Notes

1. See No. 4 and n. 3, and No. 6.
2. See No. 2.
3. See No. 4, n. 1.
4. See No. 6.
5. No direct reply to this telegram was found, but see No. 10.

8. Ch. Herzog [Washington] to the Israel Ambassador in Washington. 5 January 1954

Copy: 130.20/2488/5

Summary

Herzog criticizes the policy on military aid decided on at the meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 18 November 1953,[1] and he recommends that it be changed. The policy was based on the mistaken assumption that the sum allotted for the aid was limited to $30 million, and on the mistaken tactic that it would be preferable not to raise the issue and to prevent the Arabs from obtaining arms even though it meant that Israel would not get them either. Herzog contradicts these assumptions.

Firstly, the Mutual Security Act allows the transfer of up to 10% of the budget from one item to another, thus a sum allotted originally to other countries could be re-allotted to the Middle East. Moreover, Byroade, the assistant secretary of state, is in a hurry to use up the balance of the budget before the end of the financial year in June 1954, so that he can request additional allocations; he intends using these for political pay-offs.

Secondly, the tactic of standing still and doing nothing will not gain Israel anything. It has never been the case that Israel mounted a public campaign and did not achieve – at least partly – its aim.

Herzog therefore proposes that Israel renew its demand for military aid, while stressing that it has supported the concept of defending the region against invasion and defending the ideals of the free world, and condemned the use of monies granted as military aid for political bribes – as the Arabs keep doing. Such a campaign will gain sympathy for Israel among the general public and the Jewish community in the United States, and will strengthen its bargaining power in regard to military aid to the region and to the allocation of the arms at a later stage. Passivity on this issue may result in

Israel finding itself without arms, while some of the Arab states will obtain military aid and Israel will get nothing.[2]

Notes

1. In the meeting attended by the prime minister, minister of defence, the chief of the General Staff and senior officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence, the military expressed their objection to the request for military aid from the United States, because such a request could be injurious to the campaign against the arming of the Arab countries and the apprehension that such aid would be conditional on an American military mission that would reveal the alignment and deployment of the I.D.F. The meeting ended with a decision that in the meantime Israel would not take the initiative and would continue to object resolutely to the provision of arms to the Arab states, but that the army would prepare a detailed list of requirements should the necessity arise – see Vol. 8, No. 517 (Editorial Note).
2. Following consultation with the chief of General Staff, Harkabi sent a reaction to Herzog's proposals. Israel should continue to object to the arming of the Arabs, and the fact that this aid could be construed as political bribery would facilitate this objection. Objection to provision of this aid should continue even at the price of Israel losing the possibility of receiving military aid. The aid to Israel just serves as an alibi for the State Department to continue arming the Arabs. As for Israel participating in the regional defence, it had already taken a positive decision in principle and it had no political or security objection to it, including providing information on the I.D.F. It was a fact that this readiness was not received with similar goodwill on the part of the United States. (See Harkabi to the I.D.F. military attaché in Washington, 31January 1954, 130.20/2488/5.)

9. Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 5 January 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2397/18

Summary

Eliashiv had intended to request a meeting with Molotov in order to raise the issue of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union. In view of Gromyko's categorically negative reply,[2] he thinks it inadvisable to request such a meeting because of the certainty of another negative reply, and also because it would not be the correct conduct in respect of Gromyko. He therefore proposes that only isolated cases of reunification of families be dealt with for the time being. The results of the Big Four foreign ministers' conference in Berlin[3] could critically affect the issue of the immigration. If the conference has positive results and the tension between the blocs abates, then perhaps

the matter of immigration will also benefit; however, if the conference results in failure, then this Israeli cause is hopeless.

Notes

1. Eliashiv submitted his letter of accreditation as Israel minister to the Soviet Union on 14 December 1953.
2. Eliashiv met with Gromyko on 21 December 1953 and among other subjects raised the issue of the immigration of Soviet Jews to Israel. The reply he received was categorically negative – see Vol. 8, No. 599.
3. The summit meeting of the foreign ministers of the Four Powers held in Berlin from 25 January 1954 dealt with the future of Germany and peace treaties with Germany and with Austria. This meeting ended without any results – see No. 24 (Editorial Note).

10. Ch. Herzog (Washington) to the United States Division. 6 January 1954

Coded Tel. 841; Inc.: 130.09/2310/9

Summary

Herzog reports on Shiloah's talk with Byroade, at which he was also present. The subject was the conjectural treaty between the United States and Pakistan. Byroade said that the United States was aiming at a regional treaty based on Pakistan and Turkey, which would be joined at a later stage by Iraq. Such a treaty would assure financial aid to Pakistan and Iraq. Following a heated argument, Shiloah summarized Israel's position as follows:

(1) Israel has no opinion in respect of Pakistan.

(2) The arming of Iraq will be considered a threat against Israel.

(3) Prior to allotting military aid to the countries of the region, the United States should emphasize to them the necessity of complying with the United Nations' directives.

(4)*Israel's wish to be a partner and a consultant in matters relating to the defence of the region, should be taken more seriously.

Shiloah also raised the issue of the Suez Canal blockade, and said Israel might submit the matter to the Security Council.[1] He complained that the United States was in no hurry to act on this issue, in contrast to the prompt manner in which they had dealt with the problem of the diversion of the Jordan River.

Byroade replied that the situation in the Canal differed from the Jordan affair, where there was the danger of immediate conflagration. Shiloah commented that perhaps Israel had been mistaken in not making of the Canal blockade an issue which could lead to immediate conflagration.

In conclusion Byroade promised he would try to persuade the Egyptians in the matter of the blockade, though America's standing in that country had suffered as a result of the United States deferring to the British in the dispute between Britain and Egypt. Regarding Iraq, he said he was sorry but America had to move forward, and perhaps the day would come when Israel would also be a partner to the treaty.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 6.
2. A detailed report on the meeting, dated 15 January 1954, is filed under 93.08/358/4.

11. M. Kidron (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 7 January 1954

Notes

1. The reference is to the diversion of the Jordan River bed where Israel had begun preparations in the demilitarized zone south of the Benot Yaaqov Bridge for the operation of a hydroelectric power station as part of the national water project. This work ceased following Syrian complaints and the intervention of Bennike, Chief of Staff of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization, and the subsequent debate in the Security Council. In the course of this debate, the three Western Powers submitted a draft resolution (see Vol. 8, No. 573), the operative article of which, paragraph 11, read as follows:

   > [The Security Council] requests and authorizes the Chief of Staff to explore possibilities of reconciling the interests involved in this dispute including rights in the Demilitarized Zone and full satisfaction of existing irrigation rights at all seasons, and to take such steps as he may deem appropriate to effect a reconciliation, having in view the development of the natural resources of the area in a just and orderly manner for the general welfare.

   The deliberations on the draft resolution were abortive, and on 29 December the Security Council passed a procedural resolution to postpone the debate until January 1954.
2. In his speech, Vyshinsky criticized the draft submitted by the Western Powers, as not contributing to the solution of the problem, and called for the postponement of the debate until a resolution that would enable finding a solution to the conflict

was found with wording that was agreeable to Syria and Israel. (See *SCOR, Eighth Year*, 654th Meeting, 29 December 1953, pp. 4–12.)

3. See No. 3, and n. 1.
4. The next meeting took place on 21 January 1954 and the voting on the 22nd – see No. 28 (Editorial Note).

12. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to M. Kidron (New York) and R. Shiloah (Washington). 7 January 1954

Coded Tel. 331; Outg.: 130.09/2310/5

Summary

Rafael refers to Kidron's telegram on the secretary-general's hesitation to make public Jordan's reply on the matter of Article XII.[1] The Israeli press gives prominence to reports from Washington saying that the officials of the Department of State do not interpret Jordan's reply as a refusal to meet with Israel, and propose as a compromise a meeting under Article XI, on the lines suggested by Jernigan.[2] Therefore, and also in deference to the secretary-general, Israel agrees to postpone its public reaction for another day or two. At the same time, Israel is concerned about the possibility that the secretary-general and the Department of State will exploit this postponement in order to work out a compromise, and then Israel will lose both ways. Shiloah is therefore instructed to approach the Department of State and to submit Israel's position as insisting on convening the conference with no further delay.

Notes

1. See No. 5. In this telegram, Kidron reported on Hammarskjöld's decision to delay the publication of Jordan's reply for a few days, until he received a new reply, and if this were not forthcoming – he would publish it together with his own reply. Kidron also advised to accede to Hammarskjöld's and Cordier's request that Israel delay its reaction so as not to impede his efforts (see his telegram to the M.F.A., 5 January 1954, 93.01/2181/8,). Hammarskjöld published the exchange of telegrams on 22 January – see No. 29 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 2.

13. R. Shiloah [Washington] to the Israel Ambassador in Washington. 8 January 1954

Copy: 130.20/2488/4

Summary

Shiloah reports on discussions and consultations he had recently with his colleagues in the embassy on the matter of American aid to countries in the Middle East. A majority of the staff thought that Israel should begin an intensive political campaign along the following two main lines:

(1) To oppose vigorously America's intention to supply arms to the Arab states before they have changed their attitude towards Israel.

(2) To approach the United States concurrently with a vigorous demand to enter into negotiations with Israel on the problem of the defence of the Middle East and the equipping of Israel, and increasing its capability to play a role in this task.

The majority of the staff thought that a passive attitude would be ineffective. Opposition to arming the Arabs unaccompanied by concern about the defence of the Middle East may be construed by American public opinion as disregard of the defensive needs of the free world.

Reports received since that consultation took place show that the Department of State intends to begin utilizing the allocation for military aid to the Middle East in the near future, and to commence, first of all, with military treaties with Pakistan and Iraq. The plan to be presented to the American public will be that of a regional defence treaty of the northern Middle East, including these two states and also Turkey, as Dulles said in his speech on his return from the Middle East.[2] Such a presentation will be accepted by public opinion, which will see in it an additional link in the regional defensive system of the free world.

As to Israel's opposition, the Department of State will argue that none of the states included in the treaty has a border with Israel. The Department believes that the Jewish community in America will find it difficult to come out against an American or Western plan of defence.

In view of the above, the arguments of the majority of the staff that a simply negative stance will not suffice, and that Israel's opposition to the arming of the Arab states should be accompanied by positive proposals – acquire double validity. Shiloah, therefore, requests that this problem be studied as soon as possible and that a policy to be submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs be decided on.

Notes

1. See e.g. No. 8.
2. See ibid.

14. Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 8 January 1954

Coded Tel. 67; Inc.: 130.09/2326/2

Summary

Eliashiv reports on his talk with Zaitsev, of the Middle East Department in the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the main subject being the work in the Jordan River bed.[1] Eliashiv presented his arguments according to the instructions he had received from Israel,[2] criticized the Soviets' attitude and voiced Israel's wish that the continuation of the work should not be dependent upon Syria's agreement. The answer was that Soviet support of talks between Israel and Syria on that subject was in line with Israel's long-standing position. Eliashiv replied that there was a difference between a demand for negotiations in general and an isolated issue which did not touch the other side at all and on which its negative attitude was well known in advance. Zaitsev concluded by saying that Israel's position was clear to him, and the talk turned to other subjects connected with Israel.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 11.
2. See Eytan's telegrams, Nos. 76, 77, dated 3 and 5 January 1954, to the legation (in File 130.09/2326/1) including directives for a meeting in the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the Jordan River works.
3. For the full report of the meeting see Gideon Rafael's letter to the East European Division, 21 January 1954, 130.11/2492/17.

15. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 11 January 1954

Notes

1. See No. 11, n. 1.
2. On 1 January 1954, Turkey, Brazil and New Zealand replaced Greece, Chile and Pakistan as non-permanent members of the Security Council. The other non-permanent members that continued were Colombia, Denmark and Lebanon.
3. On the meeting with Vyshinsky, see No. 19 and n. 4.
4. In a further telegram of the same day, Eban expressed his concern at the possibility that under pressure from the Vatican, Colombia might abstain from supporting Israel in the Security Council on matters not pertaining to religious affairs – such as the Jordan works – the conference with Jordan according to Article XII and the Suez blockade. He suggested sending M. Tov on a special mission to Bogota (W850, 93.01/2210/1). On 12 January Eban cabled about Tov's success in obtaining an undertaking by the Colombian ambassador, with permission from his Foreign Ministry, to support the draft resolution of the three Western Powers (No. W860, ibid.).
5. See No. 2 and n. 1.
6. See No. 3 and notes.
7. See No. 6 and notes.
8. Charles Malik, Lebanese representative at the U.N., was president of the Security Council during January 1954.
9. The reference, apparently, is to a recent statement by King Saud. He called Israel "a cancer" and added that 10 million Arabs should be sacrificed in order to destroy it. (See *Jewish Agency Digest*, 12 February 1954.)
10. See No. 4 and n. 1.
11. To the foreign ministers' summit meeting that was to open in Berlin on 25 January (see No. 24 [Editorial Note]. On Eban's meeting with Dulles – see No. 23.
12. Eytan's instructions to Eban were: Regarding the Jordan River works – not to ask Vyshinsky about the veto because such a question would annoy him and cause resentment, without obtaining a direct reply; as to the conference according to Article XII, they accept Eban's proposal to delete the section regarding urging the Powers to support the U.N. secretary-general's initiative; about Suez, they agree to Eban's proposal and request that the issue of passage to Eilat be included. (See Eytan's telegrams to Eban, TNW334, TNW336, 13 January 1954, 130.09/2339/1.)

16. Report on a Meeting of the Interministerial Committee on the Arab Boycott. (Jerusalem, 11 January 1954)[1]

Report: 130.02/2427/5

Summary

Representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Transport, Commerce and Industry took part in the meeting. G. Rafael of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs presided.

Rafael opened the meeting and said that the Arab boycott had lately turned into a most effective weapon against Israel. While Israel took the initiative on other fronts and battled for its cause, in the matter of the boycott the initiative was with the Arabs, and Israel's defence was only partly successful.

Ya'ari reported on the developments on this front. The boycott has spread still further and has been gaining in efficiency and can record a number of successes: not so much in causing factories and businesses in Israel to close down – the effect in this field has been limited – but in deterring businesses from abroad from investing in Israel. The most serious aspect is the blockade on shipping in the Suez Canal and to Eilat, which caused Israel's trade with countries in Asia and Africa to shift to other markets. Israel took some counteraction, inter alia in aiding the businesses subject to Arab pressure, keeping strictly confidential the operations of businesses trading with Israel, and taking political action in the Administration and in Congress in the United States. Certain active steps were also taken, including an attempt to act against businesses investing in the Arab states. Israel plans to appeal to the Security Council in the matter of the maritime blockade, though one cannot be certain that the Council will vote in favour of Israel.

A discussion took place following Ya'ari's report and many suggestions for action were put forward. Rafael summed up with the proposal to set up small professional executive committees to act against the boycott, while the Interministerial Committee will decide on the general lines of action.

Notes

1. This committee was established in February 1953 and it included in addition to representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, representatives from the Ministries of Finance, Commerce and Industry and Transport. Its purpose was to supervise the activities of the Division for the struggle against the Arab Boycott in the M.F.A.
2. See No. 4, n. 3.

3. The reference is to the commercial agreement signed in June 1953 between the Bank Leumi Le'Israel and the National Bank of Iran. This was a clearing agreement on goods, including oil, for the sum of 500,000 Dollar. See Koslov to Shiloah, EWA74, 17 November 1954, 93.01/2210/22; summary by A. Gefen on Iran-Israel and Iran-Arab relations, 25 November 1954, 130.02/2410/11.
4. The circular letter signed by Sh. Ya'ari, dated 3 January1954 is filed under 93.04/39/26.
5. In October 1953 the British oil companies, under pressure of the Arab boycott, ceased the flow of crude oil from Kuwait to the Haifa refineries. Israel's protests to the British Foreign Office and an official Note were to no avail – see Vol. 8, No. 527 and No. 49 in the present volume.

17. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 12 January 1954

Coded Tel. 913; Outg.: 130.09/2310/5

Summary

The United States Division reports that the Americans have requested data[1] on the effluence of the Jordan and the Yarmuk Rivers, also the reports and brochures on water resources and development in the upper Jordan Valley as well as the Israel Government's comments on the Main Plan[2] and especially how it may adversely affect Israel's water plans.

At a consultation with the participation of Sharett, which took place on 11 January,[3] it was resolved to respond immediately to the Americans' first two requests and to inform them that the government was still collecting data in respect of the third matter. In the meantime, it will be necessary to see what the Arabs do, to continue preparing Israel's criticism of the Main Plan, including the non-exploitation of the Litani's waters,[4] to request Cotton to draw up an alternative plan,[5] and to prepare a brief practical proposal for the first stage focusing on bringing to completion the Israeli hydroelectric project[6] and the digging of the Jordanian part of the Yarmuk River bed.[7] If the United States is genuinely interested in advancing matters, it will adopt this plan, which will ostensibly demonstrate Israel's readiness for cooperation and will postpone the need to decide on critical issues, such as the final division of the water resources and cooperation between the countries on this matter.

Notes

1. The Note, Russell to Sharett, in File 130.02/3694/3. More detailed demands requested by the embassy in memorandum of 7 January, ibid.

2. The Main Plan (named for the office that prepared it), the plan for regional exploitation of the Jordan waters, was prepared at the request of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees under the guidance of Tennessee Valley Authority (T.V.A.) officials and published in October 1953. The plan dealt with the open waters in the drainage basin of the Jordan River that were destined for irrigation of the Jordan Valley lands, including lands in east Jordan. Lake Tiberias was intended to be the regulatory lake and two additional artificial basins would be dug: one in the Yarmuk River and the other in the Hatzbani River. Allocation of the waters would be as follows: Jordan – 63.5%, Israel – 32.5% and Syria – 4%. (See the unified development of the water resources of the Jordan Valley region, in File 130.02/3689/3. See also Vol. 8, No. 463.)
3. For details see File 13.02/3694/3.
4. On 5 February 1954 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent to Russell a summary of the requested material that had already been submitted and additional material that would be submitted later because of technical reasons (130.02/3694/4).
5. A regional water plan prepared by the American water engineer Cotton at Israel's request. Contrary to the Main Plan, it envisaged the joint exploitation of the Litani River, and Israel's share of the water was 55%.
6. see No. 11 and n. 1.
7. For the Yarmuk project – see No. 37 and n. 3.
8. Eric Johnston visited the Middle East, including Israel, in October 1953 as special representative of the president of the United States in order to obtain the agreement of Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria to the joint exploitation of the waters of the Jordan and Yarmuk Rivers on the basis of the Main Plan (see Vol. 8, Nos. 436, 478). His second visit was planned for the beginning of 1954 but took place only in June – see No. 258.

18. Note Verbale from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the British Embassy in Tel Aviv. 12 January 1954

Notes

1. In this Aide Memoire, the British Government stressed its sincere interest that Israel continue the process of releasing the blocked accounts of Arab refugees. This was because of difficulties that had arisen as a consequence of verdicts handed down in the Nablus court that required Barclay's Bank and the Ottoman Bank to release monies that had been deposited in their branches in Israel. These verdicts could serve as precedents for claims to release all the blocked accounts in the amount of about 4 million pounds sterling. (The Aide Memoire in File 130.02/2401/22.)
2. The decision was taken in December 1952 – see Vol. 7, Companion Volume, Editorial Note on p. 314.
3. The British reply in No. 41.

19. M. Kidron (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 13 January 1954

Coded Tel. XA338; Outg.: 93.01/2181/8

Summary

Kidron reports on Hoppenot's talk with Vyshinsky on the Soviet position in the debate in the Security Council on the plan of diverting the waters of the Jordan River.[1] Vyshinsky said he was worried about the lack of clarity in paragraph 11,[2] and especially about expressions like "reconciling the interests involved in this dispute including ... development of the natural resources of the area." They consider this a carte-blanche for the Americans to take over the Middle East. He would need a few days to give the problem proper consideration. Hoppenot concurred, and his impression was that the Soviets would not go as far as casting a veto. Eban talked with Wadsworth and demanded that the present wording be adhered to. He thought a Soviet veto highly improbable. Eban will meet Vyshinsky on 14 January.[4]

Notes

1. The diversion channel of the Jordan River waters – see No. 11, n. 1.
2. See ibid.
3. Voting in the Security Council took place on 22 January – see No. 28 (Editorial Note)
4. At the meeting that took place on 14 January, Vyshinsky made it clear to Eban that the Soviets objected to paragraph 11 because it was not relevant to the matter under discussion and they were concerned that its wording made it possible for extraneous interests such as the Johnston Plan. He said that they would be satisfied if the paragraph were to be amended in a manner that would make it clear that the its sole purpose was to find solutions to issues related to the diversion channel. Eban gained the impression that a change in the wording of paragraph 11 would prevent the Soviet veto. (See telegram Kidron to the M.F.A., X344, 14 January 1954, 130.09/2331/4.)

20. Meeting of the Israeli Embassy Staff in Washington, 11 January 1954 (document dated 14 January 1954)[1]

Report: 130.20/2460/8

Summary

Eban listed four main subjects on the agenda of the embassy in Washington and on which Israel will adopt a line of initiative and attack: (1) The Jordan River diversion channel; (2) Jordan and Article XII; (3) The Egyptian blockade of the Suez Canal; (4) The arming of the Arab states.

(1) He is optimistic about the possibility of the Security Council adopting the Western draft in the matter of the diversion channel.[2] He does not think the Soviets would impose a veto, because they had never done so except in matters affecting directly the Soviet Union or its allies. However, if they do so this time, it will be construed by Israel as a hostile act and a new situation will arise in the relations between the two countries. Israel aims at attaining a definitive decision on this issue which would transfer the problems to be discussed to the area itself, with the object of resuming the work.

(2) The debate on Article XII[3] demonstrated how right Israel was in taking the initiative in this matter. Israel had not succeeded in averting a condemnation in the Qibya affair, but had succeeded in putting the Arabs in a difficult political and moral situation. However, Israel was not aiming at attaining a tactical advantage or a short-term success: the object was to derive practical results from this initiative. Israel would gain whether Jordan accepts the invitation or not. If Jordan refuses to participate in the conference, Israel will propose to the secretary-general of the United Nations to set a date and a venue for the conference and will appeal to the Security Council if Jordan does not appear at the conference table. The secretary-general will presumably adopt this line, and in any case Israel could not then be accused of causing the failure of the conference.

(3) The embassy has received the go-ahead from Israel to renew the complaint against Egypt in the matter of the Suez Canal blockade.[6] Eban does not know the reasons behind Egypt's decision to tighten the blockade; perhaps it was the growth of Israel's trade with Africa, perhaps the difficulties in the negotiations with the British on the evacuation of the Canal Zone. He suggests waiting with the Suez issue until the case of the diversion channel has been settled. In the meantime the ground for this action should be well prepared, including talks in the various capitals. When the issue is raised, Israel has to demand that this time the Security Council set a

definite date for the implementation of its resolution. The weak point in the 1951 resolution was the absence of such a date.

(4) Israel should campaign against any military aid for the Arab states,[7] and at the same time remind the United States that two or three years have already passed since Israel proposed to America to discuss its participation in the defensive array of the Western world. No response was given to this approach, and the injustice in arming the Arabs is made still more manifest against this background. Israel should attack the arming of Iraq and Saudia claiming it to be not only as a danger in itself, but also as these two countries bear the responsibility for the collective enmity of the Arab League towards Israel. On the other hand, Israel will appear as the only country in the region which adheres to the principles of democracy and peace. The first step in this campaign will be a meeting with Dulles,[10] and Israel will simultaneously mount an impressive public campaign focusing mainly on the Members of Congress.

Notes

1. Recorded by Sh. Kariv, second secretary at the embassy.
2. See No. 11 and n. 1, No. 19.
3. See No. 2, n. 1.
4. See No. 3 and notes.
5. The secretary-general's reply was given only on 7 February – see No. 60.
6. See No. 4 and n. 3, and No. 6.
7. See No. 13.
8. See No. 4, n. 1.
9. In his address to the nation before the two houses of Congress on 7 January, President Eisenhower stated that the United States would take a supportive, friendly and unbiased stand towards all nations in the Middle East region.
10. See No. 23.

21. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 14 January 1954

Coded Tel. 797; Outg.: 130.16/2948/6

Summary

Rafael disagrees with Eban on Israel's policy in the matter of Article XII. He thinks that Israel would gain no advantage from Jordan's being forced to attend the conference. On the contrary, the danger exists that the Powers and the United Nations will come out in Jordan's support as a reward for having

agreed to the conference, or should this happen, they would divide the blame for the failure of the conference evenly between the two sides. He therefore proposes that Israel should be satisfied with the success achieved so far with Jordan's refusal and refrain from exerting pressure on the Powers and on the secretary-general of the United Nations. In general, he thinks that Israel should concentrate in the near future on stressing the negative character of the Arabs' policy with the aim of causing the Western Powers to despair of enlisting them for any sort of constructive plan of defence, development and regional cooperation. Only if the West cools off towards the Arabs will the necessary atmosphere be created for Israel to renew its attempts at improving the relations.[3]

Notes

1. Cf. No. 20, section b.
2. See No. 15.
3. Zvi Zinder, press officer at the permanent mission to the United Nations, disagreed with Rafael's appraisal. He was of the opinion that reducing the pressure regarding Article XII could present Israel as searching for immediate tactic accomplishments, and as an attack on the integrity of the U.N. secretary-general and prevent it from being able to rely on this Article in the future. (See his telegram to Rafael, 21 January 1954, 93.03/3007/5.)

22. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 14 January 1954

Coded Tel. TNWA338; Outg.: 130.09/2339/1

Summary

Eytan briefs Eban before his meeting with the Indian ambassador. Eban should speak out frankly and stress that India has repulsed a natural ally like Israel and put its entire trust in the Arab states, under the illusion that they will support its struggle against Pakistan. India has not used its influence in Asia to moderate the hatred against Israel, and in the United Nations it has voted with the Arabs against direct negotiations. It also went back on its firm promise to establish normal relations with Israel. As long as this state of affairs persists, there will be no ground for cooperation and the two states will have to defend themselves separately against the threat of the growing power of the Islamic world.[2]

Notes

1. In these telegrams (dated 12 January 1954, in File 130.09/2310/9), he reported on a talk at a social event between the military attaché Herzog and the Indian ambassador and minister in Washington. During the course of the discussion Herzog pointed out the common interests of India and Israel as a consequence of the U.S. intention to arm Pakistan and stressed the need to strengthen ties. As a result of this discussion, the Indian ambassador invited Eban for a talk.
2. On Eban's meeting with the Indian Ambassador, see No. 40.

23. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the United States Division. 15 January 1954

Coded Tel. WIA870; Outg.: 93.01/2210/1

Summary

Shiloah reports on Eban's meeting with Dulles, at which he was present. The Americans were represented also by Byroade and Waller. Eban said that there had been a regression in the policy of the Arab states – from refusing to arrive at a peaceful settlement to denying the validity of the Armistice Agreements. He pointed to the tightening of the Egyptian blockade of the Suez Canal by extending it to the Gulf of Eilat and by adding more items of merchandise to the black list. Israel cannot stand by and watch this process of deterioration and it will raise the issue in the Security Council; Israel expects the United States to come out in support of the Armistice regime and of international law.

Eban then turned to Jordan's refusal to meet[2] under Article XII and the Syrians' opposition to the draft resolution on the work in the Jordan River channel. He also referred to Saud's aggressive statement, and attributed all these manifestations to Arab interpretation – which he hoped was erroneous – of Western policy towards the Arabs in the past few months. In view of all the above, Israel opposes any attempt at supplying any Arab states with arms. He also referred to the fact that all of Israel's proposals for a discussion of the defence of the region had not been given serious consideration.

The secretary of state agreed that many of the issues raised by the ambassador demanded serious consideration. The situation in the Middle East was unpropitious and distressing and he was afraid that the United States was not popular in the region, neither with the Arabs nor with Israel. He stressed that the Government of the United States dealt with every case on its merits and that was what he told the Lebanese and Syrian ambassadors

who came to him to protest against the formulation of the draft resolution on the Jordan River bed, while stressing that no state had the right to obstruct a neighbour's water development schemes.

As regards the supply of arms, Dulles said that nothing had been settled yet, and in any event arms supplied to the Arab states will be of minimal value and Israel's interests will be taken into account in this regard. As to Article XII, he referred it to Byroade, who said that the United States supported the efforts of the secretary-general of the United Nations to convene the conference.

Dulles requested clarifications on Israel's intention to raise the issue of freedom of navigation in the Security Council. He asked whether the ambassador's words implied that Israel had decided finally to raise the subject or whether it planned to consult with the United States. Eban replied that he had been instructed to raise the subject at an appropriate time. Dulles said that it was preferable to wait for the settlement of the Jordan River bed issue. He was also interested in Eban's talk with Vyshinsky,[5] and agreed that Paragraph 11 of the draft resolution should be amended to allay any apprehensions on the part of the Soviet Union.[6]

Notes

1. For the conference according to Article XII – see No. 2.
2. For the work of diversion of the Jordan River bed – see No. 11.
3. See No. 15 and n. 9.
4. See No. 20 and n. 9.
5. See No. 19 and n. 4.
6. See the detailed report of the meeting, 25 January 1954, 130.20/2488/4, and the American record of the meeting, *FRUS 1952-54*, Vol. IX (part 1), No. 768.

24. Editorial Note

Submission of Notes from the Government of Israel to the Four Powers on Reparations from East Germany

From 25 January through 18 February 1954 a conference of the foreign ministers of the Four Powers took place in Berlin. The purpose of the conference was to bring to an end the occupation regime in Germany and Austria by signing peace treaties with these countries, and to deliberate the security situation in Europe. The Russians, for their part, endeavoured to expand the conference's mandate to include issues relating to the Far East

and China. The conference reached an impasse and ended without any results.

On the occasion of the conference, Israel submitted Notes to the governments of the Four Powers in their capital cities, reasserting its demand for reparations from East Germany. The three Notes submitted to the Western Powers were similar, while the Note to the Soviet Union also referred to the Note submitted on 15 September 1952. This Note requested the Soviet Union to use its influence on the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) to accede to Israel's demands for reparations, and contained a paragraph stating that Israel's claim was of a unique nature and had no connection to the compensation arrangements after the Second World War. Therefore this should not be made conditional on peace settlements to be signed in the future and there was no reason to delay settlement until final peace arrangements had been made. (For the Note to the United States see No. 35 and for the wording of the other Notes see 130.02/2445/7.)

25. A. Eban (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 19 January 1954

Notes

1. For the draft resolution at the Security Council on the diversion of the Jordan River waters episode – see No. 19, n. 1, 4.
2. The wording of paragraph 11 was amended as follows: "Requests, authorizes Chief Staff explore possibilities reconciling the Israeli and Syrian interests involved in Benot Yaaqov dispute as well as rights individuals in Demilitarized Zone and full satisfaction existing irrigation rights all seasons and to take such steps as may deem appropriate effect a reconciliation." (See Eban to Rafael, 19 January 1954, 130.09/2331/4.)
3. Following is the wording proposed by Eban: "Requests, authorizes Chief Staff explore possibilities reconciling local interests involved Benot Yaaqov project as well as rights individuals in Demilitarized Zone and including full satisfaction existing irrigation rights all seasons and to take such steps as may deem appropriate in accordance with his responsibilities under Article V General Armistice Agreement to effect a reconciliation with due regard legitimate economic development." (See ibid.)
4. Paragraph 13 (12 in the amended resolution – see Editorial Note, No. 28).
5. Paragraph 9 of the draft resolution calls upon the U.N. Chief of Staff to maintain the status quo in the Demilitarized Zone as determined in the Armistice Agreement.
6. For this version see Vol. 8, No. 603 and appendix.
7. For the amended version of the draft resolution that was put to the vote on 22 January see No. 28 (Editorial Note). In this version, paragraph 9 was deleted and paragraph 11 became paragraph 10.

26. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 19 January 1954

Copy: 130.02/2403/12

Summary

Rafael sums up a number of points raised in the consultation with the minister of foreign affairs on the subject of guarantees to Israel with the imminent conclusion of the new agreement between Britain and Egypt.[1]

It was agreed that Israel would no longer demand written guarantees to be included in that agreement. Israel had come to the conclusion that all its efforts to persuade the British to include such guarantees were fruitless.

It was therefore decided to demand such guarantees be given concurrently with the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian agreement, the reason to be given being the creation of a new situation in the Middle East. Israel's demands will be as follows:

(a) A reciprocal declaration by Israel and Egypt on the termination of the state of war between them according to the resolutions of the Security Council. All hostilities would cease as a result, including first and foremost the Egyptian constraints on the freedom of navigation.

(b) Reciprocal guarantees to be exchanged between Egypt and Israel to refrain from threats or the use of force against the territorial integrity and the independence of each of the two countries.

(c) With the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian agreement, Britain and the Unites States to declare that the arrangements provided in the treaty were aimed at increasing the security of the entire region against an external attack and that these Powers were abiding by their declared policy of promoting peace and stability in the region on the basis of the existing territorial situation.

(d) Britain and the United States to undertake to supply arms to Israel in order to offset the Egyptian military superiority.

(e) A defensive arrangement to be arrived at between Israel and the West enabling the storing of armaments in Israel for use in an international emergency. The West will train crews for the operation of the equipment and the installations and will strengthen the civilian industry in Israel, which could be retooled to produce military equipment in time of need.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 1 and notes.
2. On 6 February Rafael added in his handwriting in the margin of the document:"To (c), agreed by the minister to work through friendly channels. To (d) agreed to raise the matter in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. To (e) agreed to bring [express] such agreement to friends, to wait for reaction from the British government." M. Gazit, commenting on this document, believed that there were chances only for proposals (c) and (d), and as for (a) and (b) he believed that the British could argue that these were matters concerning both Israel and Egypt. As for the proposal for approval of the guarantees, there was no doubt that the Three Powers would willingly agree. As for (e) the prospects for approval would be valid only after the completion of negotiations. (Comments to the ambassador in London, 28 January 1954, 130.02/2403/18.) Avner, on the other hand, believed like Rafael that proposals (a) and (b) should be put to the test and submitted to the United States as well, but he recommended to demand that the Powers act to implement them only after the Anglo-Egyptian agreement had been signed. As for proposal (c) and (d) he believed that they should insist upon action simultaneously with the signing of the agreement. (See his letter of 4 February 1954, 130.13/2599/4). Gideon Rafael summed up saying that there was general objection to the renewal of the Three Power Declaration. On the other hand, he considered it important that the Three Powers declare at the end of the negotiations with the Egyptians that they were committed to guaranteeing the existing territorial situation. (See his letter to Avner, 18 February 1954, 93.04/41/5.)

27. G. Avner [London] to W. Eytan. 21 January 1954

Notes

1. Avner's letter was not found. Eytan replied that Britain was still an important country and requests should be put to it for assistance on all those matters that approaches were made to the United States, and even to France, even though relations with them are not the best. Furthermore, there were issues in which Israel has common interests with Britain, such as guaranteeing quiet on the Israel-Jordan border, because of Britain's special relations with Jordan and its unwillingness to be drawn into troubles arising out of flare-ups on the Armistice line. (See Avner's letter, 13 January 1954, 130.02/2382/8.)
2. Gazit wrote that he too accepted the view that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the country to which you are accredited should not be bothered too much, but believed that the special circumstances prevailing in Britain require constant contact with the British Foreign Office, which was well organized and had good sources of information. On many occasions, Israeli representatives had profited from talks there, and had succeeded in influencing them. (See Gazit to Eytan, 21 January 1954, 130.02/2382/8.)
3. See No. 24 (Editorial Note).

4. In his letter Avner questioned the decision to mount an Israeli or Jewish information campaign at the Foreign Ministers' Conference in Berlin as well as the submission of Notes to the Powers on the issue of reparations from Eastern Germany. He argued that the time was not ripe because the Powers were not agreed on the future of Germany and any action taken at the wrong time could lead to failure when the situation might be more convenient (15 January 1954, 130.02/2445/7).
5. See Eytan to Israeli representatives in the capitals of the Four Powers, 8 January 1954, 93.08/419/9.

28. Editorial Note

Security Council Vote on the Draft Resolution Concerning the Diversion of the Jordan River Bed near Benot Yaaqov Bridge.

On 22 January 1954, at the 656th meeting of the Security Council, a vote was taken on the second amended version of the draft resolution submitted by the United States, Britain and France (United Nations document S/3151/Rev. 2) regarding the complaint submitted by Syria on 16 October 1953 on the work Israel had carried out to divert the Jordan River south of the Benot Yaaqov Bridge (see No. 11 and No. 25). The version to be voted on was identical in the main to the original draft resolution, except for the deletion of paragraph 9 and changes in paragraph 10 (previously 11). Following is the wording of the draft resolution:

The Security Council,

1. *Recalling* its previous resolutions on the Palestine question;
2. *Taking* into consideration the statements of the Representatives of Syria and Israel and the reports of the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision Organization on the Syrian complaint (S/3108/Rev.1);
3. *Notes* that the Chief of Staff requested the Government of Israel on 23 September 1953 "to ensure that the authority which started work in the Demilitarized Zone on 2 September 1953 is instructed to cease working in the Zone so long as an agreement is not arranged";
4. *Endorses* this action of the Chief of Staff;
5. *Recalls* its resolution of 27 October 1953, taking note of the statement by the Representative of the Government of Israel that the work started by Israel in the Demilitarized Zone would be suspended pending urgent examination of the question by the Council;
6. *Declares* that, in order to promote the return of permanent peace in Palestine, it is essential that the General Armistice Agreement of 20 July

1949 between Syria and Israel be strictly and faithfully observed by the Parties;

7. *Reminds* the Parties that, under Article 7, paragraph 8 of the Armistice Agreement, where the interpretation of the meaning of a particular provision of the Agreement other than the preamble and Articles 1 and 2 is at issue, the Mixed Armistice Commission's interpretation shall prevail;

8. *Notes* that Article 5 of the General Armistice Agreement between Syria and Israel gives to the Chief of Staff, as Chairman of the Syrian-Israeli Mixed Armistice Commission, responsibility for the general supervision of the Demilitarized Zone;

9. *Calls* upon the Parties to comply with all his decisions and requests, in the exercise of his authority under the Armistice Agreement;

10. *Requests and authorizes* the Chief of Staff to explore possibilities of reconciling the Israeli and Syrian interests involved in the dispute over the diversion of Jordan waters at Banat Ya'qub, including full satisfaction of existing irrigation rights at all seasons, while safeguarding the rights of individuals in the Demilitarized Zone, and to take such steps in accordance with the Armistice Agreement as he may deem appropriate to effect a reconciliation;

11. *Calls upon* the Governments of Israel and Syria to co-operate with the Chief of Staff to this end and to refrain from any unilateral action which would prejudice it;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to place at the disposal of the Chief of Staff a sufficient number of experts, in particular hydraulic engineers, to supply him on the technical level with the necessary data for a complete appreciation of the project in question and of its effect upon the Demilitarized Zone;

13. *Affirms* that nothing in this resolution shall be deemed to supersede the Armistice Agreement or to change the legal status of the Demilitarized Zone thereunder;

14. *Directs* the Chief of Staff to report to the Security Council within 90 days on the measures taken to give effect to this resolution.

Seven countries voted for the resolution; the Soviet Union and Lebanon voted against; Brazil and China abstained. The resolution was not passed because the Soviet Union imposed a veto on it. This was the first time that the Soviet Union had used the veto on a proposal concerning Israel-Arab relations.

(See *Yearbook of the United Nations,* 1954, pp. 73–74.)

29. Editorial Note

Statement by the U.N. Secretary-General on the Question of the Convocation of an Israel-Jordanian Conference under Article XII

On 22 January the secretary-general released the following statement on the Israeli-Jordanian conference:

> As already published, a reply was received early in January from the Jordanian Government to my invitation to discuss the time and the place of the conference requested by the Israeli Government under Article XII of the Armistice Agreement. As that reply seemed to me to call for further consultations I sent a new message to the Jordanian Government on receipt of their reply. So far I have not received any reply to this second message.
>
> As appears from Article XII of the Armistice Agreement the Secretary-General is under a legal obligation to convoke a conference when he is called upon to do so under the circumstances set out in the Article.
>
> Personally, I feel that the conference would serve a useful purpose, if it is set up within the framework of the Armistice Agreement and if its scope is limited strictly to questions deriving from the implementation of that agreement.
>
> In line with what I have just said I consider that the conference should be kept within the limits of the Armistice Agreement both as concerns its set-up and the scope of its work. In my view the Armistice Agreement opens possibilities for participation in the conference of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. If the parties would consider it useful that the Secretary-General himself, or somebody representing him, take part in the conference, I think that such a proposal should be accepted, and I am willing to co-operate personally to all the extent that my time permits.

(See U.N. Press Release SG/363, 22 January 1954, filed under 130.16/2948/6.)

30. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett. 22 January 1954

Notes

1. The Soviet veto on the draft resolution about the Jordan River works – see No. 28 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 15 and n. 7.
3. See Editorial Note, No. 29.

31. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 22 January 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2394/16

Summary

Tsur notices a certain change in the attitude of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the supply of arms to Israel following his meeting with Schumann[1] and the contacts between Divon and Maillard.[2] Although no positive reply has been received yet in the matter of the vehicles, they no longer state that "the time is not appropriate," as Parodi had said.[3] In a brief talk with Bidault, Tsur reminded the minister of foreign affairs of a letter on this subject, and the latter replied "Je m'attache à cela." The negotiations on the warplanes, which began about a year ago, are progressing well and most of the departments concerned are inclined to approve the agreement.[4]

Tsur thinks that the time is now favourable for earnest and thorough negotiations on purchase. On the one hand, international tension has abated and the manufacturers of arms are expected to press for the purchase of their products. On the other hand, tension has increased between France and the Arab League in connection with the North African problem. This atmosphere may arouse the proponents of cooperation between France and the Arabs to warn against the danger of a rift between France and the Arabs, but it is more probable that this situation will encourage attitudes favourable to Israel.

In this connection, Tsur proposes to consider the idea first raised in Divon's talk with Maillard, to try and reach a comprehensive agreement with France on the supply of arms. This could take the form of an unwritten agreement between the two countries on the supply of various types of arms in a normal situation and also on special easier terms during an emergency. Any agreement of this sort would of course have to include certain

reservations which would not deny to Israel the right of acquiring arms from other sources nor of accepting military aid gratis from other countries.

Tsur requests to be informed by the director-general – after consultation with those concerned – of the decision in principle on this matter. If the reply is favourable, he will continue sounding out the French on such an unwritten agreement.[6]

Notes

1. At a meeting on 17 January with Maurice Schumann, secretary of state in the French Foreign Ministry, Tsur thanked Schumann for his assistance in obtaining the permit to purchase weapons in France. He stated that in military circles this was most appreciated and reiterated the request for permits to purchase tanks, a request that had been first raised in November 1953. Schumann said that he would deal with the matter and added that the foreign minister has taken a most positive approach but pointed out that the French were apprehensive of the possibility of losing the friendship of the Arab states by taking too obvious a step, and France's obligation to get British and American assent to any sale of arms to the Middle East. Tsur replied that Israel undertook as in the past to prevent publication of its purchases in France. Schumann promised to discuss the matter with the head of the Africa-Levant Department in the French Foreign Ministry. (See Tsur to the West European Division, 17 January 1954, 130.10/2516/11.)
2. The meeting on 20 January dealt with Israel-France relations in the area of arms purchase. Maillard presumed that the French Foreign Ministry would approve the establishment of a factory for the assembly of airplanes, including jet airplanes, in Israel and the sale of a number of jet airplanes of the "Mystère" class. As for tanks, he stated that although there had been an improvement in the atmosphere, they would have to wait another few weeks until a decision was taken. Maillard said that in British and American circles, as well as French, there was an assumption that Israel was exaggerating the danger of Arab aggression and was devoting excessive funds to the purchase of arms. He also asked if Israel was planning to purchase airplanes and tanks elsewhere. Divon replied that the supply of modern weapons to Israel would be a saving in other areas of its security budget. He stressed that it was important for Israel to know whether and to what extent it could rely on France in this matter, both for long-term planning and for emergency situations. He pointed out that even if they did come to an arrangement, it could be presumed that Israel would purchase equipment from other countries.

   At a further meeting held on 27 January on the possibly of long-term planning, Maillard pointed out that even if France took an independent approach it was committed to act in coordination with Britain and the United States in order to prevent an arms race in the Middle East. But if the United States implemented its plans to arm the Arab states, it could be presumed that France would accede to Israel's requests. He also stressed France's interests in the Arab world that constituted an objective obstacle to the friendly relations developing between France and Israel. Therefore, frequent sales that could be interpreted as partiality to Israel's benefit could not be expected. (See Divon to the West European Division, 22 January 1954, 29 January 1954, 130.10/2522/21.)

3. The meeting with Parodi took place at the beginning of 1953. Parodi said that when France authorized the sale of guns to Israel at the beginning of August it was stated that this was the last item of munitions to be sold. Since then the Qibya incident occurred and pressure had been applied by Britain and the U.S. not to sell arms to Israel. (See Tsur to the West European Division, 22 November 1953, 93.02/164/2.)
4. See Vol. 8, No. 328.
5. The reference is to the protest demonstration of inhabitants of Spanish Morocco at the removal from office of the Sultan of Morocco, Muhammad V, by the French in August 1953 and the enthronement of his uncle. This protest demonstration was held in January 1954 at Tétouan, the domicile of the Spanish High Commissioner.
6. Eytan, who did not see any drawback to such an agreement, requested Najar to take up the matter with the Ministry of Defence. Najar, who considered that the existing relations with the French should continue, since they existed on a firm basis, doubted whether it would be possible to reach an overall agreement regarding arms purchases, because two years earlier the French had made the French monopoly in this area as regards Israel a condition to their agreement. Peres, the director-general of the Ministry of Defence, issued a warning on behalf of the minister of defence, against talks about overall agreements because they could demand a political price that it was doubtful that Israel could meet. Also from a practical point of view the idea did not seem worthwhile, because it was not expedient to be restricted to a single source of arms. (See Eytan to Najar, 28 January 1954, Najar to Tsur, 7 February 1954, 130.10/2522/21; Peres to Tsur 10 February 1954, 130.02/2394/16.)

32. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 23 January 1954

Notes

1. Following the Soviet veto in the Security Council concerning the Jordan River works – see No. 28 (Editorial Note).
2. One of Syria's complaints was that the diversion of the Jordan River gave Israel a military advantage. This argument was also accepted by Bennike in his decision of 23 September 1953 – see Vol. 8, No. 381, appendix, section 7 (e).
3. Sharett reacted positively to points 1–3, 5 and 7 with the following reservations: In (2) "But we reserve the right to renew the work without pressure being exerted"; as for (7) "But we will not insist on the exchange of Notes, it will be sufficient if he does not raise the question again." As for point 4, Sharett preferred "not necessarily after clarification, but perhaps at the same time as the clarification, since regarding the land, new facts are not being created, and regarding water, in the meantime the intention is only to dig and not divert." For point (6) he instructed "do not give an undertaking in advance, it will be sufficient if we do not renew the work at present. If they demand an undertaking, cable." (See telegram 955, 26 January 1954, 130.09/2310/5.) See also the government decision in No. 34 (Editorial Note).
4. See Eban to Sharett, W895, 23 January 1954, 93.01/2210/1.
5. See No. 45.

33. Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 23 January 1954

Coded Tel. 94; Inc.: 130.09/2326/2

Summary

Eliashiv reports on his meeting with VOKS[1] on the subject of cultural relations between Israel and the Soviet Union. The atmosphere was very pleasant, and Eliashiv submitted wide-ranging plans and stressed the principle of reciprocity. VOKS agreed in principle, but suggested that Eliashiv submit concrete plans so that the proper bodies could be approached. On scientific relations, he was advised to apply directly to the Academy of Science, and on the subject of literature – to the Foreign Committee of the Writers' Union. Eliashiv remarks on the significant change in the attitude compared with that two years ago, when the protocol people refused to set up a meeting for him with VOKS.[2]

Notes

1. The All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. The meeting took place on 22 January.
2. For a full report of the meeting see Eliashiv's letter to the East European Division, 26 January 1954, 93.39/449/3.

34. Editorial Note

Government's Decision on 24 January 1954 Following the Security Council's Resolution on the Diversion of the Jordan River

On 24 January 1954, the minister of foreign affairs presented to the government meeting a review of recent deliberations in the Security Council on the diversion of the Jordan River and of the significance of the Soviet veto on the draft resolution proposed by the Western states. Following a discussion, the government took the following decision:

1. The Government notes that the ending of the debate in the Security Council without any decision being taken means the failure of Syria's complaint against Israel that had lead to the Security Council dealing with the matter.

2. The Government reiterates that on 27 October 1953 it undertook before the Security Council to cease work on the Jordan River channel temporarily during the period when the examination of the situation was being carried out by the Council, and points out that this examination has now ended.

3. The Government states, that in keeping with its declared stand on the issue and further to its initiative prior to the debate in the Council, it is prepared to discuss with the Chief of Staff of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization suitable guarantees for maintaining the private rights involved in carrying out the project. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been instructed to take action in this direction.

(See the wording of the resolution in File 130.02/3688/9; see also the minutes of the government meeting, 24 January 1954.)

35. Note from the Israel Ambassador in Washington to the U.S. Secretary of State. 25 January 1954

Notes

1. See No. 24 (Editorial Note).
2. For the wording of these Notes see Vol. 6, No. 84 and Editorial Note, pp. 162–163.
3. In the Note in reply, the secretary of state wrote to the Israel ambassador that the United States government was aware of Israel's interest in this issue but the matters mentioned in the Israeli Note were not raised at the foreign ministers' conference in Berlin (16 March 1954, 130.02/2445/7). Concerning the submission of the Note in London and British reactions, see No. 27, n. 2. In Paris the Note was received with obvious disfavour and the French expressed their doubts at the possibility of accepting the Israeli demands and even of the possibility of their putting pressure on East Germany, which they did not recognize. (See Tsur to the director-general and the West European Division, telegram 664, 17 January 1954, 130.09/2345/4.)

   In Moscow, Eliashiv submitted the Note to Deputy Foreign Minister Zorin on 18 January. Zorin observed that the word "refusal" in the final section of the Note was not accurate, because East Germany had not replied at all. Eliashiv replied that the absence of a reply was equal to a refusal. At the conclusion of their meeting, Zorin promised to pass the matter on to Molotov. (See Eliashiv to the M.F.A., telegram 87, 18 January 1954, 130.09/2326/2.)

36. A. Eban (Washington) to G. Rafael. 25 January 1954

Coded Tel. 900; Outg.: 93.01/2210/1

Summary

Eban agrees that the government's decision[1] is wise and well-balanced, but the main thing is that he should be authorized to act on the lines of No. 32.[2] The matter of the Suez blockade must also be raised urgently. The Arabs are now assuming that Israel is afraid of a Soviet veto.[3] He is concerned about the negative impression which will be created by a do-nothing policy in this matter, and points to articles in the press and intimations that Israel is about to renew its demand for free navigation. As to the issue itself, he is not expecting a Soviet veto because they are interested in preserving the international character of the Suez Canal, and because Israel is in a strong position in view of the past resolution by the Security Council on freedom of navigation. The renewal of the debate in the Security Council would also be of importance to Israel's campaign on arms purchase. It will be easy to put the Egyptians in a situation whereby they would lose their right to obtain arms, and the right to arms of the other members of the Arab League would also be put in question.

Notes

1. See No. 35 (Editorial Note).
2. No. 32.
3. It should read, from the imposing of the Soviet veto in the Security Council concerning the diversion of the Jordan waters.

37. R. Shiloah (Washington) to G. Rafael. 25 January 1954

Coded Tel. WIA901; Outg.: 93.01/2210/1

Summary

Shiloah reports to G. Rafael on Eban's meeting with Johnston, at which he was also present. The discussion began with setting the date for Johnston's visit to the Middle East. The Department of State was pressing for as early a date as February.[1] Shiloah explained that Israel was still in the middle of a thorough study of Johnston's plans and said it was doubtful whether the

assessment would be ready by then. It was agreed in conclusion that Johnston would arrive in Israel at the end of March.

Johnston said that he was still optimistic about his plan, in spite of the resolution adopted by the Security Council[2] and the opposition of Syria and Lebanon to the entire project. He mentioned his success in preventing the Jordanians from undertaking an irrigation project of their own (the Yarmuk plan). This plan originated in a blunder at the American embassy in Amman, following which changes in personnel took place there.[3]

Johnston mentioned a number of ideas developed by the Americans, aimed at facilitating the adoption of his plan by the Arabs: one was handing over the administration of the water project to an external body, with no contact between the Arabs and Israel (the Israeli representatives voiced their categorical opposition to this idea); another idea was to compensate Jordan by giving them the territory in the triangle between the Jordan, the Yarmuk and Lake Tiberias. Johnston said that he himself was strongly opposed to this idea. The third suggestion was to give to the Syrians a part of Lake Tiberias – the Israelis vigorously opposing this proposal too. Johnston tried to find out whether Israel would agree to the American engineers working in Jordan on the water project crossing over to Israel to carry out the necessary surveying. The Israelis thought it would be best for the engineers to apply to the government departments concerned and that they would be allowed to carry out the necessary work in Israel as far as possible.

During the conversation, the Israeli representatives again raised the issue of the Litani and warned against any planning and implementation which did not include this river.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 17
2. See No. 28 (Editorial Note).
3. The Jordanian plan, prepared by the American engineer Bunger in 1952, for the establishment of a hydroelectrical project for the exploitation of the Yarmuk waters for the irrigation of the Jordan Valley, with the aim of settling about one hundred thousand refugees. In 1953, agreement was reached to carry out a preliminary engineering survey financed by funds from the Point 4 program, the U.N. Relief and Works Agency and Britain.
4. Shimoni and Salkind met with Malcolm Jones on 4 January 1954, and with Gardiner together with Jones on 5 January to discuss the Main Plan. They stressed the errors in the assessment of the water needs of Israel and Jordan, and expressed their reservations about the data, estimations and evaluations. They insisted that an exact and practical plan be prepared on the basis of practical and exact examinations on the site, prior to any deliberations on political questions. The Americans, on the other hand, were of the opinion that these two tracks should be carried out concurrently and there was no reason to delay negotiations on principles.

Shimoni and Salkind concentrated their main criticism on the non-inclusion of the Litani River in the regional water plan and on the restrictions the plan imposed on the transfer of waters from the Jordan River drainage basin to other areas. As for the second point, the Americans agreed that the main purpose of the plan was the allocation of waters to the countries, and following upon the allocation, each country was free to divide the waters in its area as it saw fit.

The Americans' main concern was the matter of the powers of the international authority that would manage the regional water project. They insisted that the authority should manage the water project by itself, including the control of opening and closing the sluice gates and not be restricted to the supervision of the process. Shimoni and Salkind summed up, saying that this issue required that Israel take a decision in principle whether to agree to a regional water project managed by an external body without direct cooperation between the countries involved (see also No. 108). During the course of the discussion, Gardiner raised the question of territorial adjustments, such as relinquishment by Israel of the triangle between the Jordan and Yarmuk Rivers and Lake Tiberias, with the aim of serving as an incentive to the Arab states to join the project. (See the reports by Shimoni and Salkind, 9 January 1954, 11 January 1954, in File 130.02/3688/11.)

38. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 25 January 1954

Coded Tel. WIA910; Outg.: 93.01/2210/1

Summary

Eban proposes to approach the United States officially to transfer its embassy to Jerusalem, or at least ask that the ban on its representatives meeting the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jerusalem be lifted.[1] This request is to be based on the outcome of the last United Nations Assembly which ended without the least mention of the Jerusalem issue, and also on the Vatican's negative and sterile reaction to the proposal made by Secretary of State Dulles for a functional solution to the problem.[2] Eban is aware of there being no prospect whatsoever of a positive answer, but he thought the demand in itself would constitute a dignified move which could perhaps make the Americans lift the ban gradually; also, the expected concerted violent reaction of the Jordanians and the Vatican to the proposal would highlight the unity of mind between Israel and the United States and the impossibility of their finding a solution satisfactory to both countries.[3]

Notes

1. Following the transfer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Jerusalem in July 1953, the foreign legations in Israel placed a sort of embargo on the Ministry. They remained in Tel Aviv and their representatives refrained from visiting the Ministry in Jerusalem; contacts were maintained through a liaison bureau that functioned in the government offices in Tel Aviv – see Vol. 8, Nos. 292, 301.
2. The reference is to the attempt to obtain the agreement of the Vatican to a functional solution to the problem of Jerusalem according to the plan of Secretary of State Dulles of June 1953, the main point of which was international supervision of the holy places by a United Nations authority that would have statutory rights based on agreements between the authority and Israel and Jordan, without prejudice to the Israeli and Jordanian sovereignty over Jerusalem. The attempt failed and the Vatican maintained its demand for territorial internationalization. See Vol. 8, No. 257.
3. In a consultation held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 5 February, chaired by the minister, it was decided to reject Eban's proposal on the grounds that an official request to the State Department could result in a negative reply that would have an adverse effect on those diplomats who had contacts in Jerusalem. It was also decided to continue efforts to arrange visits with the prime minister in Jerusalem of as many foreign representatives as possible, including the American emissary, Johnston. In a telegram to Eban, the apprehension was expressed that submission of such a demand would open unnecessary conflict with the Americans at a time when their support was needed to deal with the Suez Canal boycott and the conference according to Article XII. (See summary of the meeting at the M.F.A., 8 February 1954, 130.02/2443/11; the United States Division to the Israeli embassy in Washington, telegram 10, 9 February 1954, 130.09/2310/5.)

39. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 26 January 1954

Notes

1. Renewal of the work on the Jordan River bed – see No. 32 and notes.
2. See No. 34 (Editorial Note).
3. In a meeting with Murphy on 27 January, Eban analyzed the implication of the Soviet veto on the issue of the diversion of the Jordan River. He pointed out the choice between submission to the veto and the search for a way to comply with the will of the majority, as they had done in the past in cases when the Soviet Union had imposed the veto in the Security Council, and he suggested a practical way to continue the diversion project without adversely effecting the legitimate rights of the inhabitants of the area (see, for example, No. 39). Murphy agreed with Eban's analysis, to the consternation of Ludlow who was present. Ludlow argued that it was not expedient to forgo a further effort to reach an agreed resolution in the Security Council, and proposed that Israel agree to accede to the Security Council's request and declare its readiness to negotiate with Syria in order to obtain its agreement, and thus prevent a definitive resolution that would require the agreement of the Syrians.

(See Shiloah to the United States Division, WIA924, 27 January 1954, 93.01/2210/1.) On that same day Eban also met with Byroade, but the Jordan River issue was not raised.

40. A. Eban (Washington) to W. Eytan. 26 January 1954

Notes

1. See No. 22.
2. See No. 23.

41. Note Verbale from the British Embassy in Tel Aviv to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 27 January 1954

Notes

1. See No. 18.
2. Bendor recommended that the proposal of the British banks not be rejected because the financing of a project that would have to be undertaken sooner or later would thus still be possible. However, because of public opinion in Israel and the apprehension that the Arabs would construe the concession as a sign of weakness, he suggested telling the British that they accepted their proposal in principle, but the release of accounts would be delayed to a more suitable time. He also suggested that the release be carried out by the Conciliation Commission in accordance with the procedure that had already been determined. (See Bendor to Eytan, 1 February 1954, 130.02/2474/11.)

   Following upon negotiations with the Ministry of Finance on the level of credit and terms of repayment, the banks transferred the matter to the mediation of the Conciliation Commission. (See exchange of correspondence in File 130.02/2451/19, No. 226.)

42. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 27 January 1954

Coded Tel. 348; Outg.: 130.09/2310/5

Summary

Rafael reports on information received from confidential sources that a meeting was held the previous week between the secretary-general of the United Nations and Zain al-Din, the Syrian representative. Hammarskjöld

proposed a compromise between the various draft resolutions submitted to the Security Council by giving Bennike wide powers for solving the problems connected with the Jordan channel on the spot. Zain al-Din replied that the Security Council was the body entrusted with the task of reconciliation, and that the solution to the issue was in utilizing the waters of the Jordan for the resettlement of refugees south of Lake Tiberias and devoting land west of the Jordan to the same purpose.

Hammarskjöld then said again that his proposal for a compromise rested on granting powers to Bennike and that he himself tended to accept the Lebanese procedural proposal as a basis for the compromise.[1] He proposed continued contact with Zain al-Din in the efforts to arrive at a compromise.

The minister of foreign affairs requests Eban to arrange for an urgent meeting with the secretary-general and to warn him against any compromise based on an explicit decision by the Security Council to stop the work on the Jordan River bed, and also against any compromise based on territorial concessions.[2] This warning is has doubly important because of the ideas mentioned by Johnston on such a compromise. As Israel has accepted the principal points of Johnston's plan as delineated in No 32,[3] Eban should demand of the secretary-general and the Powers not to raise the issue again at the United Nations and especially not on the lines proposed by Lebanon, as any such resolution could ruin any prospects of action according to No. 32.[4]

Notes

1. On 21 January, in the course of the Security Council meeting, the representative of Lebanon submitted a draft resolution (U.N. document S/3166), which he defined as procedural, in the event that the Three Power resolution would not be passed. The operative clauses in the proposal determined that the Security Council approved the actions of the Chief of Staff of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization as described in his report of 23 October 1953, including his instruction to cease the excavation work in the diversion channel, and requested that he examine the possibility to conciliate between the two parties. This proposal was not put to the vote. (See *SCOR, Ninth Year,* 655th Meeting, 21 January 1954, p. 16.)
2. See No. 37 and n. 4.
3. See No. 32.
4. For Eban's reply, see No. 43.

43. A. Eban (Washington) to G. Rafael. 27 January 1954

Coded Tel. WIA928; Outg.: 93.01/2210/1

Summary

Eban reports that following a lengthy process of persuasion, Murphy and Hammarskjöld accepted Israel's argument that the way to a solution of the Jordan channel problem lay in empowering Bennike to decide and not in convening the Security Council. Murphy's assent has displeased his superiors, and it may be assumed that Hammarskjöld will also be a target for Arab criticism. It is therefore of the utmost importance that a letter to Bennike be dispatched as quickly as possible.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 39, n. 3; No. 42.
2. See No. 42, n. 1.
3. See No. 46.

44. Resumé of a Consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (Jerusalem, 26 January 1954, document dated 27 January 1954)

Copy: 130.02/2413/24

Summary

The document sums up a consultation on the problem of relations with Spain held on 26 January. Prior to the consultation, a memorandum was submitted by Y. Barromi,[1] who proposed that a consulate be opened in Barcelona as a first step towards the normalization of the relations between Spain and Israel. Barcelona is a good location for developing commercial and maritime relations, and there is a Jewish community there. The opening of a consulate in a city which is not the capital of the country will stress the commercial and practical aspects of this step.

The director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs studied the proposal, but decided that it best to open a consulate in Lisbon, taking into account the possible reactions in public opinion. In the discussion that followed, A. Levavi argued that Israel could not cope with the problem of

relations with Spain without opening a mission there. Najar also supported the idea, stressing the political aspects of this step, in particular in view of Spain's influence in Latin America and its being the arena of Arab political activity. He said that international relations could not take into account the nature of the internal regimes of the countries concerned. Darom said that in principle he supported opening the consulate but that the time and place should be chosen carefully. He pointed to the problematic nature of relations with Spain, mentioning in particular the dispute between Spain and France over Morocco. Any step construed as being in favour of Spain could harm Israel's good relations with France. He proposed waiting until the Franco-Spanish dispute has been solved. The problem of the budget required was then discussed, and it was remarked that connecting the opening of a consulate in Spain with the opening of a consulate in the People's Republic of China could make the solution of this problem easier.[3]

Notes

1. The memorandum from Barromi, dated 20 December 1953, in File 130.12/2578/12.
2. The reference is to the agreements of 26 September 1953 according to which Spain gave the United States the right to maintain naval and air bases on its territory in lieu of military and financial aid.
3. The matter was brought to the attention of Sharett. He wrote that he approved the opening of a consulate in Barcelona but did not see the necessity of connecting it with the opening of the consulate in the People's Republic of China. (See Sharett's note on Shek's memorandum, 18 January 1954, 130.02/2413/24.)

45. A. Eban (New York) to the President of the Security Council. 28 January 1954

Notes

1. The memorandum is on file, but is not printed here. The present letter and the attached memorandum were distributed among the members of the Security Council as document S/3168. The debate on the Israeli complaint opened on 5 February – see No. 54 (Editorial Note).

46. W. Eytan [Jerusalem] to Major-General V. Bennike (Jerusalem). 28 January 1954

Notes

1. See No. 34 (Editorial Note).
2. In his reply, Bennike wrote that the Security Council had not completed its deliberations on the issue. There would be an exchange of views between him and the Government of Israel on the outcome of the debate in the Council after it had ended, and after he had received and studied the minutes of the Council. Eytan passed on the main points of the reply to Washington and added that the next step should be that Hammarskjöld and Cordier should instruct Bennike to renew negotiations with Israel as had been agreed. (See Bennike to Eytan, 29 January 1954, 130.02/3688/9; Eytan's telegram to the Israel embassy in Washington, No. 352, 29 January 1954, 130.09/2310/5.) See also No. 50.

47. A. Moore (Tel Aviv) to W. Eytan. 28 January 1954

Notes

1. On this conversation, see Vol. 8, No. 178. Prior to this letter, Moore had informed Eytan on 19 January, of the stationing of a British armoured squadron in Amman (Moore to Eytan, 16 January 1954, 130.02/2408/12).
2. See No. 87 and n. 1.

48. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 28 January 1954

Coded Tel. 961; Outg.: 130.09/2310/5

Summary

Sharett instructs Eban to inform the Department of State that Israel is seriously considering the establishment of relations with China.[1] Israel considers this step as a way to break through the tightening blockade by the Arab states and to improve its relations with the countries of Asia and with India in particular. The establishment of relations with India would have a great effect in the Arab capitals, and the step in the direction of Peking would constitute a stage in Israel's peace campaign. It is left to Eban's decision whether to mention that the first approach was made by the Chinese

and that Israel would prefer to appear before the Committee of Five[2] before the Arabs do so.[3]

Notes

1. At the beginning of November 1953, the Chinese chargé d'affaires in Finland contacted the Israeli chargé d'affaires there with a proposal for an exchange of representatives between the two countries. (See Vol. 8, Nos. 513, 592.) There was no unianimous opinion in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning the question of relations with China. Eytan believed that "This development opens before us great opportunities and is important for us both from the point of view of our commerce as well as our political relations with the countries of Asia" (Eytan to David Hacohen, 26 January 1954, 93.13/226/3). Bendor and Lourie, on the other hand, objected to taking steps toward establishing diplomatic relations with China but did not consider attempts to establish commercial ties as being harmful (see Bendor's memorandum to Eytan, 9 February 1954, 130.02/2414/3).
2. The reference is to the conference that took place in Geneva from the end of April to 21 July 1954, which dealt with issues concerning Korea and Indo-China. Representatives of 19 countries including the Four Powers and the People's Republic of China attended the conference.
3. In a telegram dated 31 January, Sharett added the following directives: "Add that the Chinese have begun to explore the possibility of purchasing industrial goods and we intend to examine the feasibility of marketing our industrial goods and that we are vitally interested in expanding it [this market] in every possible way." (Telegram to Eban, 975, 130.09/2310/5). See also No. 65.

49. Note from the British Embassy in Tel Aviv to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 30 January 1954

Notes

1. A Note of protest by Israel against the intention of British oil companies, under pressure of the Arab boycott, to cease supplying crude oil from Kuwait to the Haifa Oil Refineries – see Vol. 8, No. 527.
2. See ibid, No. 404.

50. A. Eban (New York) to the Secretary-General of the U.N. 31 January 1954

Notes

1. On 29 January. Cordier confirmed in this conversation that the secretary-general supported the idea that Bennike reply in the affirmative to Eytan's letter to him, written on behalf of Sharett (No. 46) and stated that he would send a clarification to Bennike on the following day (see Eban to Eytan, telegram 411, 29 January 1954, 130.09/2331/4).
2. Bennike's reply to Eytan's letter written on behalf of Sharett – No. 46, n. 2.
3. Following is the wording of Hammarskjöld's reply: "...that discussions with your Government can be initiated. These discussions should take place on the basis of the interpretation of the situation of General Bennike, which I have given in the conversations that you and I have had on this matter. Thus, as matters now stand, General Bennike could not take any definitive action on the basis only of an understanding with the Israel Government." Cordier, who handed the letter to Tov, confirmed in reply to his question that the significance of the instructions was that Bennike could begin discussions on water and land rights. He also confirmed that the secretary-general would continue to support the delay of a substantive debate in the Security Council.

   In Eban's opinion, the significance of the letter is "that we will continue not to require Bennike to make any specific commitment and that we should restrict ourselves to discussions on the issues. On the other hand, there is no commitment to any action on our part that would arise from the deliberations." (See Hammarskjöld to Eban, 1 Ferbruary 1954, 93.03/3009/2; Tov to Eytan, X423, 1 February 1954, 93.01/2181/9.)

   Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials also endeavored to comprehend the significance of the secretary-general's reply. Sharett was of the opinion that the secretary-general had returned Bennike to the position he had previously held, regarding the necessity of obtaining Syria's agreement to the renewal of work. If this was the situation, Sharett argued, what was the point of it all. Rafael, like Sharett, argued that the meaning of the reply was the continuation of the stalemate, but was not sure whether the secretary-general was referring to the agreement of Syria or to the Security Council. Eytan's interpretation was that the secretary-general wished to warn Israel that agreement with Bennike would not necessarily lead to permission to renew the work, but that the renewal of work would not be possible without such an agreement. (See exchange of comments between them, attached to Tov's telegram to Eytan, X424, 1 February 1954.) See also No. 59.

51. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett. 1 February 1954

Notes

1. Date of the Qibya operations and debates that followed in the United Nations.
2. The reference is to the initiative regarding the conference according to Article XII in the Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement, freedom of passage through the Suez Canal and the diversion of the Jordan River.
3. See No. 23.
4. The reference is to the operation for funding Israel's short-term loans through a 75 million dollar loan decided upon at the economic conference of Jewish financiers and leaders held in Jerusalem at the end of October 1953. Kollek was in the United States during this period to facilitate this loan with the aid of the American Jewish communities. A request was submitted to the Department of State to assist in this operation by the distribution of repayment of loans to the Export-Import Bank.
5. The American-Israel Friendship Society was established on 21 January 1954 and among its founders were representatives of all sectors of the American public. The aims of the Society – encouragement of cultural relations and goodwill between the two countries.
6. On 30 January, Byroade delivered an address to the annual convention of the American Jewish Committee. He stated that Israel as a state existed and would continue to exist, and the United States would help to guarantee its existence. He stressed that there was no change in the basic attitude of friendship of the United States toward the new state.

52. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 3 February 1954

Notes

1. During this period there was an increased demand by the American military attaché to receive military information, and Israel's request to purchase 37mm guns within the framework of reimbursable military aid was exploited to this end. This was also the subject of the conversation between Colonel Caine and the Israeli chief of General Staff on 5 February that took place as a consequence of this meeting. (On the conversation on 5 February, see Harkabi's report, 9 February 1954, 130.02/2422/8.)
2. See No. 51 and n. 6.
3. For Sharett's reaction to Russell's proposals see No. 56.

53. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassies in Washington, London, and Paris. 3 February 1954

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2319/4

Summary

Eytan instructs the Israel representatives abroad to inform the foreign ministries of their respective countries that the Druse community in Israel is in a turmoil owing to the events in Jebel Druse.[1] The respective governments are requested to obtain further information on the situation; if the reports on massive military action by the Syrians against the Druse are verified, the governments are requested to exercise their influence in Damascus and persuade the Syrians to act with restraint.[2]

Notes

1. At the end of January, military government was imposed on extensive areas in Syria, including Damascus, Aleppo, Homs and Jebel Druse. Large military forces were sent to Jebel Druse on the allegation of armed clashes. Political leaders and military personnel including the Druse leaders Sultan al-Atrash and Emir Hassan al-Atrash, former governor of Jebel Druse were arrested. The actions in Jebel Druse, that according to rumours even included bombing of villages, caused agitation among the Druse community in Israel. The matter was raised in the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, and the prime minister and minister of foreign affairs received a delegation of the community's dignitaries.
2. See No. 82 and n. 2.

54. Editorial Note

Security Council's Debates on the Suez Canal Blockade and the Interference with Shipping in the Gulf of Eilat.

On 5 February, the debate opened in the Security Council on the Egyptian blockade of the Suez Canal and the interference with vessels entering the Gulf of Eilat (see No. 45). On the previous day, the Council passed a procedural resolution to include on the agenda the Egyptian complaint of 3 February on violations of the Armistice Agreement in the demilitarized zone of Auja, on condition that the two complaints would be dealt with consecutively and not simultaneously. Eban, who presented the Israeli complaint, argued that Egyptian interference with navigation in the Gulf of

Eilat was not only a violation of a Security Council resolution of 1 September 1951, but also of the 1888 Constantinople Covenant and of international law. He especially castigated the Egyptian demands for the rights of a belligerent party regarding the blockade of the Suez Canal. He demanded that the Council bring about the immediate cessation of all restrictions in the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Eilat and proposed that a control mechanism be established to oversee the implementation of the resolution.

Regarding the Egyptian complaint, Eban wrote to the President of the Security Council that the issues raised by the Egyptians were no novelty. They had been deliberated upon in the Israel-Egyptian Mixed Armistice Commission, the Commission had rejected one complaint, and an appeal on the second complaint was still before the special committee of the Mixed Armistice Commission, and thus was "sub judice." He called upon the Council to strike the complaints from its agenda.

(See *SCOR, Ninth Year,* 657th–659th Meetings, 4–5 February 1954; Eban to the President of the Security Council, 4 February 1954, 130.02/2405/3.)

55. E. Elath [London] to A. Lourie. 5 February 1954

Coded Tel. 372; Outg.: 93.04/40/14

Summary

Elath reports on his meeting with Roger Allen on the subject of Israel's complaint to the Security Council. Allen asked what Israel wished to achieve at the Council, and Elath replied that it was Israel's desire that the debate should focus first of all on the issue of freedom of navigation and not be diverted to other matters. Allen replied that if that was Israel's aim, then Britain's support was assured on that issue, as it wished to implement in practice the 1951 resolution on freedom of navigation.

Notes

1. See No. 54 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 63.

56. M. Sharett [Jerusalem] to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United States Division. 5 February 1954

Copy: 130.20/2488/5

Summary

Sharett replies to the queries by the United States Division on the subject of Israel's policy concerning military aid and regional defence.[1] It is obvious that Israel is not prepared and is not interested to offer bases to the United States, nor to submit to military supervision. Firstly, because this would arouse internal conflicts in Israel, and secondly, because it would increase dependence on the United States and curtail Israel's independence.

In general, the whole question of the defence of the Middle East has lost its urgency and is not on the agenda now. It is unlikely that the present Administration in America will be prepared to come to an agreement with Israel over the heads of the Arab states and without their participation. Moreover, a new factor has appeared acting against such an agreement – Israel's renewed relations with the Soviet Union, leading to renewed efforts by Israel to create contacts with the Soviet Jewry. This bond is central to Israel's foreign policy because Israel is the only Western state to have bonds of this sort.

The situation would be different if the Americans had taken the initiative in forging stronger ties with Israel without stipulating their dependence on an understanding with the Arab states. Such a shift in American policy would have increased Israel's position and it would then have been worthwhile paying a price for it – but no such initiative is to be expected at this time and it is preferable that Israel does not make any moves in that direction.

This analysis does not lead to the conclusion that Israel should retreat from its stated policy of its readiness – in principle – to participate in the defence of the region, but Israel should confine itself to a declaration in principle and not raise this subject unremittingly at each meeting – especially when it falls on deaf ears.

* * *

After the above was written by Sharett, a telegram from the director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was received[5] with information about the meeting between Russell and the American military attachés with the minister of defence, the chief of the General Staff and the director-general

himself. At first glance, what Russell said appeared contradictory to the minister's assumptions, but further study showed that no change in the policy of the United States was in the offing. This policy still endeavoured to appease the Arabs and to bribe them with arms, while Israel was being promised inclusion in the defence of the region but the date for this was set in the far future, when Israel's relations with the Arab states would have improved. In effect, Israel was again being discriminated against and was even expected to justify this discrimination.[6]

Notes

1. Bendor wrote that the Israeli embassy in Washington was following two separate lines of action in its meetings regarding military aid: (1) Strong objection to the provision of arms to the Arab states; (2) Intense demands to the Americans to discuss with Israel issues of regional defence and Israel's willingness to take an active role in it. Bendor asked if the second line of action was supported by the minister of foreign affairs and what would be Israel's reply if the United States proposed forging an alliance and setting up a military base in Israel such as that in Greece. (Bendor to the director-general, for attention of the minister, 29 January 1954, 130.02/2403/18.)
2. "He who blows the horn into a pit or into a cellar" (Tractate Rosh Hashana, 3, 7).
3. Apparently the reference is to Sharett's conversation with Acheson at the end of 1951 (see Vol. 6, No. 498), which dealt with the Middle East Command and Israel's role in regional defence. Sharett then spoke about a special, non-formal and classified arrangement because of Israel's relations with the Arab states and because of apprehension for the fate of Soviet Jewry.
4. The reference is to a Note Verbale from the Israel government to the Soviet government, 8 December 1951, in reply to a Note from the Soviet government warning Israel against joining the Middle East Command. In its Note, Israel declared that it had not been invited to join the Middle East Command and in any event had not taken a decision whether to join it – see Vol. 6, Nos. 501 and 521.
5. See No. 52.
6. See also No. 97.

57. A. Eban (Washington) to G. Rafael. 6 February 1954

Notes

1. See No. 54 (Editorial Note).

58. R. Murphy (Washington) to A. Eban (Washington). 6 February 1954

Notes

1. A letter from Eban to Henry Cabot Lodge, permanent U.S. representative to the United Nations, following upon his talk with Murphy, on the significance of the vote in the Security Council regarding the diversion of the Jordan River. Eban argued that more emphasis should be placed on the opinion of the majority in the Security Council, and not to that of the minority consisting of two members of the Council, one of whom was directly involved in the dispute, and the other the Soviet Union, whose motives were unfathomable. The majority view was inclined towards a constructive solution to the dispute and the minority view that had ulterior motives should not be submitted to. Thus, in all 56 cases in the past in which the Soviet Union imposed a veto a way was found to enforce the majority view, and if a way was not found this time it would constitute a sinister precedent. Eban also informed Lodge of the government's decision to call upon General Bennike to renew the deliberations on land rights and irrigation in the Demilitarized Zone, that could be adversely affected by the completion of the diversion project, and added that under these circumstances there was no point in continuing the debate on the issue in the Security Council. (The letter in File 130.02/3694/1.)
2. See No. 46.

59. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 6 February 1954

Notes

1. See No. 46
2. Trygve Lie, the previous United Nations secretary-general, resigned in November 1953. He attributed his resignation to the refusal of the Eastern bloc to negotiate with him.
3. In a conversation that took place on 15 February, Bennike told Rafael that he had called on experts on soil, irrigation and electricity, and that he could not continue talks with the Israeli representatives prior to the completion of the survey of these experts. Sharett decided, in response, not to take any further initiative, but to declare his willingness to meet with the experts. (See cables, Rafael to legation in New York, 16 February 1954, 17 February 1954, 130.09/2330/22; Sharett to embassy in Washington, telegram 33, 21 February 1954, 130.09/2310/5; transcript of consultation in M.F.A. on guarantees for land and water rights in the Jordan project, 21 February 1954, 130.02/2434/5.) See also No. 138.

60. D. Hammarskjöld [New York] to A. Eban (New York). 7 February 1954

Notes

1. See Vol. 8, No. 531.
2. This correspondence in File 93.03/3007/5.
3. See Vol. 8, No. 600.
4. See No. 3, n. 1.
5. See ibid., n. 2.
6. In his reply, the Jordanian foreign minister reiterated his statement of 4 January, that the only suitable legal framework for discussions about these issues was the Mixed Armistice Commission that functioned under Article XI of the agreement and argued that Hammarskjöld's promises of 22 December 1953 and his cable of 5 January 1954 on restricting the agenda of the conference to concrete matters arising out of the implementation of the Armistice Agreement only reinforced his argument. At the end of the letter, the Jordanian foreign minister added that the conference agenda should include what he termed violation by Israel of sections of the Armistice Agreement and its recurrent acts of violence. (The letter is in File 93.03/3007/5.)
7. Eban requested that Hammarskjöld clarify the final sentence of the letter. Hammarskjöld explained that he had a legal obligation to convene the conference and would do so if Israel would reply to his letter to the effect that it still wished to convene the conference. He advised Israel to explain that it had issues it wished to discuss that are beyond the authority of the Armistice Commission, but were concrete matters that should be discussed at the conference. It did not have to go into specifics. He explained that according to Article XII a conference should be convened in the event that agreement had not been reached on certain issues. Eban cabled Hammarskjöld's clarification to the M.F.A. stating that Israel's reply seemed to him to be obvious and he would draw it up accordingly. (See Eban to Rafael, W993, 8 February 1954, 93.01/2210/3.) For Israel's reply see No. 78.

61. Editorial Note

Statement by the Spokesman of the U.S. Department of State on U.S. Arms Supply to the Middle East.

On 8 February 1954, the State Department spokesman announced that the principles of the United States policy regarding the supply of arms to the Middle East region had been established by the 1950 Three Power Declaration and had not changed since. The supply of arms to the Middle East was made according to these principles and there was no discrimination in the provision of permits to export arms to Israel and to the Arab states.

Furthermore, the number of requests for permits to export arms to Israel, including those of commercial enterprises, far exceeded requests for permits to Arab states. This announcement was made in reply to requests from 29 members of the House of Representatives and 6 senators who expressed deep concern about information regarding the intention of the United States to begin a wide-ranging program of military aid to Arab states that technically were in a state of belligerency with Israel, and in reply to the complaint of Congressman Seller about discrimination against Israel as compared with the Arab states regarding the granting of permits for the export of light weapons to them.

62. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to M. Kidron (New York). 10 February 1954

Coded Tel. 888; Outg.: 130.02/2409/11

Summary

Rafael replies to Kidron's telegram[1] on the subject of the Arab boycott. Rafael points out that the boycott regulations[2] do not mention the Suez Canal nor the Gulf of Eilat but only refer to "Egypt's territorial waters." The Egyptians consider both the Canal and the Gulf to be within their territorial waters and they apply the blockade accordingly. In addition, they have made special arrangements for ships entering the Gulf in order to avoid obstructing navigation there, as in the case of the *Albion.*[3] The latest Egyptian declaration that they will remove vessels from their black list if these do not work for Israel in the future is nothing more than a ploy in preparation for the forthcoming debate in the Security Council, and it is intended in effect to make the blockade more efficient by co-opting the shipping companies in the conspiracy against Israel.

Notes

1. Kidron requested that a copy of the Egyptian regulations on navigation in the Gulf of Eilat be cabled to him (9 February 1954, 93.01/2181/9).
2. See No. 4, n. 3.
3. An American vessel was shot at by Egyptian cannons on 3 December 1953 at the entrance to the Gulf of Eilat. The ship that was on its way from Boston to the port of Aqaba in Jordan was suspected of being bound for the port of Eilat in Israel.
4. See No. 6, n. 3.

63. E. Elath (London) to A. Lourie. 10 February 1954

Notes

1. In the Note (dated 8 February 1954, File 93.04/42/6) Israel complained about the broadcasts of the Near East Arab Broadcasting Station in Cyprus, that instead of endeavouring to create a political atmosphere of building relationships between Israel and the Arab states, such as stated by Britain's official policy, broadcast material that could increase animosity toward Israel. See also the British Note in reply, 19 March 1954, ibid.
2. No. 55.
3. The United States' plans to arm Pakistan and Iraq within the framework of the establishment of a northern tier – see No. 10.
4. See No. 1 and notes.
5. See No. 53 and n. 1.

64. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 11 February 1954

Coded Tel. 892; Outg.: 130.16/2948/6

Summary

Sharett deals in this telegram with the convening of the conference under Article XII.

He expresses surprise at the statement by Israel's spokesman at the United Nations[3] of 9 February which did not mention Jordan's violation of the Armistice Agreement and came out explicitly with a renewed positive attitude towards convening the conference. Sharett is concerned about Hammarskjöld's retreat from Article XII to Article XI. Hammarskjöld's request for proof of the non-implementation of the Agreement and to receive the agenda of the conference in advance is also worrying. Sharett could agree, though with difficulty, to the first point but acceding to the second demand meant that the agenda had to be transmitted to Jordan, its comments received and answered – in short, dragging out the whole matter until it becomes pointless.

Sharett writes that there is opposition to and doubts about the conference itself under the existing circumstances – increasing Arab hostility, vacillation by the secretary-general and the Powers, the risk that failure in this plan would preclude using Article XII in future under more favourable circumstances, and the danger that the debate could turn to discussing

Articles VI[6] and VIII[5] of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement, which would not be to Israel's advantage. The conclusion from this is therefore that Israel should preferably refrain from pressing for convening the conference and make the best of a bad bargain by declaring to the world and the United Nations that Jordan has refused to participate in the conference and has thus violated the Armistice Agreement.

Sharett is aware of the arguments to the contrary, including the danger that the resulting impression would be that Israel's demand was of a tactical nature from the beginning, and also the slender possibility that the conference could after all turn out a success. In any case, the uncertain arguments in favour are in no way to be compared with the much weightier arguments against.[7] Sharett therefore requests that the entire issue be discussed anew and that he be informed of the outcome.[8]

Notes

1. Eban proposed that if Jordan published a further negative statement, Israel should break its silence, stating that Jordan's reply was negative and the matter was most serious. If the secretary-general continues his efforts to convene the conference, despite Jordan's negative reply, Israel would support him. (See Eban to Rafael, WIA907, 25 January 1954, 93.01/2210/1.)
2. This exchange of telegrams between Kidron and Eytan contained a proposal for ways to react to the expected Jordanian reply. The proposed reply was similar to that in No. 5. (See Kidron to Eytan, telegram 295, 30 December 1953, 130.09/2331/3; Eytan to Kidron, telegram 755, 31 December 1953, 130.09/2330/21.)
3. The spokesman's statement in File 130.16/2948/6.
4. See No. 60, n. 7.
5. Article VIII of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement dealt with the establishment of a special committee consisting of representatives of both parties for the purpose of formulating agreed plans and arrangements designed to enlarge the scope of this Agreement and to effect improvements in its application, relating to issues that each party would submit, that would include, at least, sections which had been agreed upon in principle such as: freedom of travel along vital roads, the renewal and normal functioning of the cultural and humanitarian institutions, holy places and cemeteries on Mt. Scopus. The special committee had been convened on two occasions during the month of November 1950 but agreement was not reached on procedure and the issues to be raised on its agenda. The Jordanians wanted to debate issues that had not been specifically listed in Article VIII and the Israeli delegation insisted that the problems specifically mentioned in that article should be dealt with first. (See Vol. 5, Companion Volume, Editorial Note on p. 230, and Nos. 459 and 488.)
6. Article VI of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement dealt with the delineation of the armistice border between the two countries in the section that had been held by the Iraqi forces. Subsection 6 determined that in the event that villages would be adversely affected by this delineation, their inhabitants should be entitled to maintain their full rights of residence, property and freedom.

7. In a further telegram of that same day (895, 130.16/2948/6) Rafael clarified that this telegram did not contradict Eban's proposal (telegram No. 4, 10 February 1954, 93.01/2210/9) in preparation for his meeting with the secretary-general. Eban proposed that at this meeting he would tell Hammarskjöld that Israel was not prepared to relinquish its demand to convene the conference in keeping with Article XII, and would be prepared to propose items for the agenda if the secretary-general announced that he was prepared to convene it.
8. Eban replied that the unified opinion of the embassy and the Israeli mission to the United Nations was that the abandonment of its initiative for convening the conference would be a most serious political error. This would be proof that Israel's constant demand for direct negotiations was not sincere, and furthermore Israel would nullify the possibility to use Article XII by turning it from an obligatory clause into an optional one. Eban accepted Sharett's comment that there should be no advance negotiations on an agenda and proposed to reply to the United Nations secretary-general that Israel would not comment on the agenda until the conference is convened, and is not prepared to forego its demand to convene it. (See Eban to Sharett, XA456, 11 February 1954, 93.01/2181/9.) For the conversation with Hammarskjöld see No. 67.

65. M. Sharett [Jerusalem] to A. Eban (Washington). 11 February 1954

Coded Tel. IWA15; Inc.: 93.01/2210/4

Summary

Sharett replies to Eban's telegram on the subject of relations with China.[1] He argues that circumstances have not allowed the establishment of such relations in the past, nor had it been possible to link them with the establishment of the relations with Burma and Japan. It has now been decided to respond to China's overtures in Helsinki[4] and in Burma[5] in the form of a one-off commercial mission headed by the minister in Rangoon. The Chinese reaction is an unknown, and in any case it will take a long time until their reply is received. In the meantime Eban is requested to sound out the Americans on this move, and Israel will take their reaction into consideration.[6]

Notes

1. Eban's cabled reply to Sharett's instructions about relations with China – No. 48. Eban warned against establishing relations with China at that time for the following reasons: At the present time there was an increase in animosity in the West against the regime in the People's Republic of China; if Israel were to take the initiative

under these circumstances, when a process of establishing relations with China was not imminent among the nations, it would take upon itself the responsibility of sparking off a momentum on an issue that had been dormant over a period of three years; therefore, it would be better that the Arab precede Israel and bring down upon themselves the main body of anger; if it were possible to carry this out at the same time as establishing ties with Burma and Japan the situation would be different, but this possibility no longer exists. He also requested considering this move in light of the strengthening of Israel's international standing in the West as against the current actions of the Soviet Union in the United Nations on issues concerning Israel. Finally, Eban asked whether in the course of his talks with Dulles and Bedell Smith he should inform them that Israel was determined to forge ties with China, or just to give them the impression that it would be prepared to abide by their reaction and advice. (Telegram dated 6 December 1954, in File 93.01/2210/3.)

2. The reference is to a proposal by the chargé d'affaires at the embassy of the People's Republic of China in Moscow to the Israeli minister there. The chargé d'affaires asked, on instructions of his government, whether it was Israel's intention to set up a diplomatic legation in China. The Government of Israel discussed the matter and decided in the affirmative in principle, but delayed taking practical steps until the situation in the Far East became clear – see Vol. 5, Nos. 284 and 289.
3. No. 48.
4. See ibid., n. 1.
5. The reference is to an official statement by the Chinese ambassador in Rangoon to the Israeli minister there concerning his government's desire for commercial ties with Israel. (See Hacohen to the M.F.A, telegram 5, 18 January 1954, 130.09/2360/9.) Levavi instructed Hacohen to reply to the Chinese ambassador "that we would like to send a mission to Peking for the purpose of examining ways to strengthen ties between the two countries. Obviously, the main interest will be in examining the commercial aspects, but the mission will also be expected to examine possibilities of establishing diplomatic relations..." (Letter, 1 February 1954, 93.13/226/3.) For the submission of the statement see No. 71.
6. Eban promised to act according to instructions, but added that the fact that in the meantime the plan was a one-time visit was a relief to the Chinese. Shiloah stressed the necessity to act with the greatest care because of the current atmosphere in the United States with the deterioration of the war situation in Indo-China. Kollek recommended delaying the visit. Following his and Eban's talk with Bedell Smith, Shiloah cabled that Smith had recommended deferring in the meantime any act of establishing relationships with China and to delay the matter until a more suitable occasion arose. (Eban to Sharett, WIA21, 14 February 1954, 93.01/2210/3; Shiloah to Sharett, WIA23, 15 February 1954, 93.01/2210/9; WIA75, 24 February 1954.) See also No. 212.

66. A. Eban [New York] to H.C. Lodge (New York). 11 February 1954

Notes

1. The second session of the Security Council on 15 February that dealt with Israel's complaint on the blockade of the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Eilat.
2. See No. 62.

67. A. Eban (New York) to G. Rafael. 12 February 1954

Notes

1. See No. 64. The meeting with Hammarskjöld took place on 11 February.
2. See No. 60 and n. 6.
3. In No. 60.
4. In Panmunjom negotiations were carried out, at intervals, on the cease-fire in Korea, from October 1951 until the signing of the agreement on 26 July 1953. Between October and December 1953, talks were held on setting the date and place of the peace conference on Korea. The talks ceased without any result.
5. For Israel's reply – see No. 73.

68. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 14 April 1954

Orig. 130.02/2443/11

Summary

Herzog reports on a consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the proposal made by the Brazilian minister to solve the problem of Jerusalem by demilitarizing its area. The participants were informed that the Brazilian proposal has aroused a certain amount of interest in several places, among them the British Foreign Office which has even worked out its own plan for the solution of the problem on lines generally similar to the Brazilian proposition, and is considering submitting this plan to the United Nations. The Vatican is also active in connection with this idea, which it considers the first step in curtailing Israeli and Jordanian influence in the city. The detailed

plan is known to the Department of State and the Italians are also toying with the idea.

Israel's first reaction was to avoid committing itself either way and thus to gain time. Herzog expresses a number of reasons why this line is correct: it is preferable that the plan be rejected by others and not by Israel; the Vatican's officially published readiness to consider this plan will tactically weaken its demand for territorial internationalization; the fact that the plan is arousing international interest confines and directs the dispute over Jerusalem to finding ways of assuring the physical safety of the holy places, that is, transforms the issue from the emotional to the practical plane. The Ministry has therefore decided that Israel will not take any initiative over the Brazilian plan in the coming several months. Israel's representatives, if asked, should evade the question and answer in generalities, such as: Israel has always been for peace in general and in Jerusalem in particular, and will always be ready to bind itself not to attack the Jordanian part of the city if there is a similar commitment by Jordan.

Notes

1. The Brazilian Minister Fabrino proposed to declare Jerusalem an "open city" (cité ouverte), i.e., a city that was not allowed to be attacked, and to bring this about in three stages: (a) a public declaration by Israel and Jordan not to attack the part of Jerusalem held by the other side, (b) demilitarization of the city, (c) establishing peace between Israel and the Arab states. The minister of foreign affairs replied that Israel was prepared to accede to item (a) immediately on condition that the Jordanians would make a similar undertaking. As for stage (b), he said that Israel would be prepared to discuss the matter, after completion of stage (a) when the proposal would be examined and considered. Regarding stage (c) hopefully the time would come. (See Eytan to J. Herzog, 25 January 1954, 130.02/2443/11.)
2. The reference is to a statement made to the Italian ambassador in London at the British Foreign Office in October–November 1953 concerning the possibility of solving the problem of Jerusalem by agreement to its division between Jordan and Israel, demilitarization of the two parts and international guarantees for the holy places. (See survey by the Political Research Division, 8 March 1954, 130.02/2443/11.)
3. The designation "regional internationalization" was given to the plan for the internationalization of Jerusalem resolved by the United Nations Assembly in December 1949 (see Vol. 4, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, pp. 291–292). According to this resolution, Jerusalem was to be accorded the status of corpus separatum under international rule under the auspices of the United Nations, within borders determined by the partition plan. This differed from functional internationalization that would be applied to the holy places – see No. 38, n. 2.
4. See ibid.
5. Boycott of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the diplomatic corps in Israel following upon the transfer of its offices to Jerusalem – see No. 38, n. 1.

69. E. Sasson and Sh. Divon (Rome) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 16 February 1954

Copy: 130.02/2410/10

Summary

Sasson and Divon discussed in Rome, from 15 to 17 February, Israel's policy regarding the Arabs. The following is a summary of their conclusions. Their impression is that the policy of all the Arab states today – each state for its own reasons – leans towards increased hostility to Israel. This hostility finds its expression in the boycott activities and in preparations for a "second round." The Arab states will initiate the "second round" the minute they feel strong enough and find the political circumstances favourable, or, alternatively, if internal problems drive them to this step. This situation nullifies the influence of the small minority which wishes to arrive at a settlement with Israel and they will most probably not dare to act when the crisis comes. Sasson and Divon therefore think that Israel's policy regarding the Arabs should be guided by three factors:

(1) To avoid, as far as possible, any act or reaction which may aggravate the enmity of the Arabs. This obviously does not include situations where serious security considerations necessitate a response to Arab acts of aggression.[1]

(2) To prepare for a "second round" by attempting to foil hostile plots and processes of integration and unification that could lead to an anti-Israeli coalition. To continue arousing doubts in the minds of the Western countries as to the efficacy of their defensive plans which are based on the Arab states.

(3) To make more efforts, though with no illusions, to encourage among the Arab public the idea of a settlement with Israel, in cautious and limited cooperation with the West.

As regards (1), it is recommended that every diplomatic step in the United Nations or in the West should be very thoroughly studied as to its effect, positive or negative, in the Arab states. The risk is that diplomatic successes in the United Nations or in the West may cause harm to Israel in the Arab world. Aggressive and provocative statements or acts that may be construed as such should be avoided. The treatment of the Arab minority in Israel should also be taken into account as a factor in the relations with the Arab states. On the other hand, statements on the attainment of peace and its vital importance for Israel should also be avoided, as they encourage Israel's enemies. This would also have a salutary educational effect, in making the

public in Israel used to the idea that many years of struggle to assure the country's security are in store in this situation of its alienation from its neighbours.

Regarding (2), the problems of the minorities in the Middle East should continue to be raised in order to demonstrate the lack of unity of this region. Members of the minorities residing in their homelands or abroad could be enlisted for this purpose. Another possibility lies in encouraging Arab and non-Arab intellectuals and journalists to persevere in making public opinion in the West and in Asia aware of the conflicts in their homelands. As to (3), Sasson and Divon propose vigorous activity among the Arab communities in the West in order to renew the ties with them and to enlist them for disseminating the idea of a rapprochement between the Arab states and Israel. Israeli Arabs should also be sent to the West to explain the importance for the Arabs in Israel of better relations between Israel and the Arab states and the hopelessness of expecting the repatriation of the refugees. Propaganda among the Arabs should be conducted through the press and also orally and all of Israel's connections should be utilized for clarification of its stand on the refugee problem and of the contribution it is prepared to make for its solution. Israel considers the process towards the settlement of the refugee problem as a factor of the primary importance in reducing the present tension.

Notes

1. The last sentence was erased and sent separately (see Divon to the minister of foreign affairs, 22.2.1954, 130.02/2410/10).

70. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 17 February 1954

Notes

1. See No. 54 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 28 (Editorial Note).
3. As a consequence of this telegram, Eytan instructed all the Israeli missions in the places mentioned, as well as in Ankara, Stockholm, Moscow and Sydney, to act urgently at the highest possible level to gain support for the draft resolution before the Security Council. (See cable to Israel missions abroad, 18 February 1954, 130.09/2377/2.)
4. At the meeting, Eban requested officially that the United States be among the sponsors of the resolution in the Security Council. Key, who was accompanied by Weller and Ludlow, replied that from the outset the United States had not

encouraged Israel to submit a complaint and its inclination was not to be among the sponsors. Ludlow pointed out that among the reasons for this attitude were the lessons learned on the vote on the diversion of the Jordan River. In the course of the talk, various allegations were raised and the atmosphere was tense. At the end of the meeting, the Americans stated that as Israel had submitted an official request for them to join the sponsors of the draft resolution, they would reassess their stand. (See Eban to Rafael, WIA50, 18 February 1954, 93/01/2210/3.)

In the event, the representatives of the Big Three approached the New Zealand delegation with the suggestion that it submit the draft resolution, while Britain, France and others would serve as co-sponsors. (See Kidron's telegram to the M.F.A., X504, 23 February 1954, 130.09/2331/4.)

71. D. Hacohen (Rangoon) to A. Levavi. 17 February 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2413/30

Summary

David Hacohen reports on his meeting with the Chinese ambassador in Rangoon. Hacohen informed the ambassador of Israel's affirmative decision to establish commercial relations with China and to dispatch a commercial mission there.[1] Details were also given to the ambassador of the various products and manufactures available for export and the possibility of adapting Israel's industry to China's needs. Hacohen stressed that in any case Israel would not breach the American embargo on the export of certain commodities and products to China[2] but explained to the ambassador that Israel thought that America's position on this issue was unwise, and Israel, in cooperation with other countries, will continue trying to persuade the United States to abandon this policy. The Chinese ambassador suggested that Israel also send samples of its products in addition to the list supplied by Hacohen, but the latter refused to do so, saying that the exchange of samples and their examination will take place when the practical stage of commercial relations has been reached; at the present stage, however, negotiations are necessary and these should be carried out by the commercial mission to be dispatched to China. He does not consider the exchange of samples between the representatives a substitute for such a mission. Hacohen comments that the Chinese ambassador paid close attention to his words, and he was certain that he would transmit the proposals to Peking.

Notes

1. See No. 65, and n. 5.

2. The reference is to Israel's commitment of January 1952 not to allow the consignment of strategic materials to Eastern bloc countries as required by the Mutual Defense Assistance Control (Battle) Act. The commitment was a condition for the proclamation in July 1952 of Israel's entitlement to reimbursable military aid.
3. See 65, notes 1 and 6.

72. Ch. Yahil (Berlin) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 18 February 1954

Orig.; 130.02/2416/16

Summary

Yahil reports on a conversation he had with Kreisky on the relations between Israel and Austria. Kreisky commenced by referring to the negotiations between the Austrian Government and the Committee for Claims of Jews from Austria on the reparations claimed from Austria.[1] He complained bitterly that the Committee was not conducting the negotiations in a serious manner. At first it demanded a large sum which was Gradually Reduced, and now it stands at 35 million Austrians schillings. Now it is accusing the Social Democratic Party of antisemitism and some of the Jewish press is threatening to obstruct Austria's efforts at international recognition. This dispute is making Kreisky very angry. He has so far kept silent because, being a Jew, he does not want to intervene, but he has now decided he has no choice but to bring some order into the situation. As regards the individual claims, he recognizes the justice of the Jews' claims and something has already been done to settle them and the rest will be dealt with shortly. He understands that the issue of heirless property has become a matter of principle, and both sides find it difficult to arrive at a compromise. He therefore suggests that a common friend, mayor of Stockholm, Anderson, who is a good personal friend of his and of Austria, and is also well known as a friend of Israel and of the Jews, try mediating between the two sides. He requested this proposal to be kept confidential for the time being, and also suggested that the negotiations be postponed for several months. The atmosphere in Austria is now very sombre because of the failure of the Berlin conference, and the economic situation is also not good now.

The relations between Austria and Israel were then discussed. Kreisky said he would be happy if diplomatic relations were established.[3] For Austria, he stressed, this was not vital because it is recognized now by everybody, but it is nevertheless interested in improving relations with

Israel. Yahil replied that Israel has the same intentions, but the crisis in the negotiations with the Jewish organizations is delaying progress in this matter. Kreisky called on Israel to exploit the present favourable situation and to establish relations also with Germany. Israel will gain many advantages from close commercial and scientific ties with Germany, and the establishment of relations with that country could have an important moral impact on international politics.

Yahil also reports on other meetings he had in Berlin on the same subject.[2] He concludes that it is best to confine the negotiations with Austria to the individual claims and not to raise claims of a national or general nature. The sum at issue has been reduced in any case, and the political and moral harm which could be involved in global negotiations would be weightier than the money claimed. Austria is today an object of compassion and international sympathy and it knows very well how to exploit this situation. He recommends a quick face-saving settlement of the problem. Any anti-Austrian activity will be ineffective and will act like a boomerang.

Notes

1. Since June 1953, negotiations had been ongoing between the Committee for Claims of Jews from Austria – comprising twenty-three Jewish organizations – and the Austrian government. The Jewish organizations claimed payment of personal reparations for victims of the Nazis, compensation for property that had been seized by the German invaders, and reparations for heirless property. In December 1953, the Committee ceased negotiations because, although the Austrians agreed to amend the laws regarding personal compensation, they argued that in the case of property the claim should be made to Germany and that the issue of heirless property should be held in abeyance until the Austrian State Treaty (see n. 2 below) had been signed. The State of Israel waived it claim for reparations from Austria and did not participate officially in the negotiations, but the Israeli consul in Vienna, Arie Eshel, maintained contact with the representatives of the organizations and gave them assistance. (See Eytan to Israeli missions abroad, 12 January 1954, 130.11/2511/13.)
2. One of the clauses discussed at the Berlin Conferance – see No. 24 (Editorial Note) – was the Austrion State Treaty, i.e., a peace treaty, abrogation of the occupation government by the Allies and the renewal of Austrian sovereignty.
3. See No. 265 and notes 1 and 3.

73. A. Eban [New York] to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. 18 February 1954

Notes

1. See No. 60 and notes.
2. The United Nations Security Council resolution about the Qibya operation – see Vol. 8, No. 534 (Editorial Note).
3. Hammarskjöld's reply – see No. 74.

74. D. Hammarskjöld (New York) to A. Eban (New York). 18 February 1954

Notes

1. See No. 73.
2. An almost identical letter was sent on the same day to Jordan. Israel replied that it welcomed the secretary's proposal that he chair the opening session of the conference, and hoped that during the course of the negotiations on the agenda and procedure the two parties would agree to assume direct responsibility for the conducting of the conference. Israel expressed its hope that the conference would be convened as quickly as possible and proposed that it be held alternately in both parts of Jerusalem. (See Eban to the U.N. secretary-general, 24 February 1954, 93.03/3007/5.)

   On 19 February, Hammarskjöld made public the documents relating to the initiative for convening the conference in accordance with Article XII.

75. Consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem, 18 February 1954)

Minutes: 130.16/2954/7

Summary

The consultation was called to discuss the problem of Syrian fishing off the northeastern shore of Lake Tiberias. The minister of foreign affairs opened the meeting reporting on the discussion of the government's Defence Committee and then described the situation where Israel has no control over territory over which it has nominal sovereignty and which is not even a demilitarized zone: the Syrians fish in the lake and fire at approaching Israeli

boats wishing to fish in the same area. This is a gross violation of the Armistice Agreement. The Syrians base their claims on the fishing rights vested in them according to the Anglo-French agreement dealing with the northern border.[1] This agreement, however, is not honoured in its entirety and the only agreement in force is the Armistice Agreement, where the matter of fishing rights is not mentioned at all. It is clearly absurd to demand the implementation of a single article in an agreement and ignore all the other articles. Israel has appealed several times to the Chairman of the Israel-Syria Mixed Armistice Commission, but his answers have been unsatisfactory. The United Nations has even transmitted a warning from the Syrian local commander, saying that the Syrians would not tolerate Israeli presence in that area.

In view of these circumstances, the military has proposed to dispatch armoured vessels to the area in question and if they are fired at, they would reply with artillery fire. The Committee has rejected the proposal on military and political grounds, fearing, inter alia, that the matter will be raised at the Security Council where Israel would be considered a violator of international peace. A proposal raised at the same meeting to harass with gunfire the Syrian fishermen was opposed by Dayan, who said he could not risk the safety of his men by exposing them to danger without artillery back up. The meeting adjourned with no decision having been taken and the issue has in effect been returned to the plenum of the government and to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for weighing the political against the military considerations.

In the debate at the consultation, general opposition was expressed to Dayan's proposals. Eytan argued that the situation was one of long standing and he did not know why it has been raised at this time – perhaps the cause was Dayan's appointment as chief of the General Staff.[4] No proof has been offered that Israel is being harmed by the situation, at least not to an extent which would justify vigorous action. Rafael also argued that a new issue should not be raised at a time when Israel is fighting on the political front on several other issues. Other participants were of like mind. Summing up, Sharett said that political activity should be intensified and that the level of those to whom the complaints are submitted should be raised. Bennike should be invited for a meeting, and copies of the complaint should be sent to the secretary-general of the United Nations.[7]

Notes

1. In a letter to the chairman of the Israel-Syria Mixed Armistice Commission, Colonel van Horen, the Syrian representative to the Commission referred to the Article in the February 1926 agreement, according to which residents of Syria and Lebanon

would have the same sailing and fishing rights as the residents of Palestine in the Tiberias and Hula lakes and in the Jordan river flowing between them. (See van Horen's letter to Reichman, 2 December 1953, quoting the Syrian representative's letter of the same date, 13.02/2343/4.)

The February 1926 "Good Neighbour" agreement was signed by the High Commissioners of France and Britain and contained slight adjustments to the international border between Syria and Palestine that had been determined in 1923. The international border ran east of Lake Tiberias and continued north parallel to the Jordan River, on its eastern side. (See Vol. 3, No. 307 and n. 1.)

2. The exchange of letters between Colonel van Horn, chairman of the Israel-Syria Mixed Armistice Commission and the representatives of the Israel Defence Forces, from end of 1953, in File 130.02/2434/4.
3. The reference is to the retaliation action at al-Hamma in April 1951, during the course of which the Israeli air force bombed the police station at al-Hamma as well as some Syrian posts in the area. The action caused a wave of strong protest in the United States and in the United Nations.
4. Moshe Dayan took up his post as chief of General Staff in December 1953.
5. The Israel-Syria Armistice Agreement set "Defensive Areas" on both sides of the border, where it was forbidden to maintain military forces, including naval and air forces, except for defence forces detailed in the annex to the agreement. See Vol. 3, Appendix I, pp. 733–734.
6. The reference is to the theft of a flock of sheep and the abduction of the shepherd from Kibbutz Dorot on 17 February. The shepherd was set free that day.
7. See No. 80.

76. W. Eytan [Jerusalem] to I. J. Linton (Tokyo). 18 February 1954

Notes

1. Linton, the minister to Tokyo, requested Eytan's guidance on the matter of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' attitude to a courtesy visit to the Spanish ambassador in Tokyo, who was soon to take up the position as dean of the diplomatic corps (130.02/2413/25).
2. The Duque de Terranova was replaced in February 1953 by Pedro Lopez-Gracia.
3. Linton replied that he tended to support normalization of relations with Spain – just as Israel was able to control its emotions when it carried out negotiations with Germany so it should act regarding relations with Franco – but in his opinion it had already missed the opportunity and Spain was in the process of actively seeking relations with the Arabs. He agreed to Eytan's warning regarding Asia, but added that the friendly relations between the representatives of India and Spain in Tokyo placed Nehru's policy in a strange light. (See his letter to Eytan, 1 March 1954, ibid.)

77. Ch. Yahil (Cologne) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 19 February 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2445/7

Summary

Yahil sums up his mission to the Berlin Conference.[1] His status was that of an observer, and he met with difficulties in obtaining written material because no arrangements had been made for the observers. He was invited to formal receptions, but the only working meetings he had were with the Deputy High Commissioner of the United States Occupation Zone and with official representatives of Germany. He was totally ignored by the Russians.

It was obvious from the beginning that Israel's claims against East Germany would not come up for discussion at this stage of the Conference, and progress on this issue may be expected only if the Soviet Union uses its influence in support of Israel's cause. The prospects of this happening at the moment are nil. Nevertheless, the claim against East Germany should not be abandoned and should be voiced at every opportunity.

There have been no changes in Israel's situation as regards West Germany and the reparations agreement has not lost its validity. However, the eventuality of the unification of Germany should be considered, when the government of a united Germany will not be bound by the Bonn Government's international agreements. This is the stand taken by the British and the Americans, though the West Germans think otherwise.

There has been no progress with regard to Israel's claims from East Germany and there is no likelihood of international activity in this sphere.

The Arab attempt to renew the campaign against the reparations agreement has failed. The Syrian minister called a press conference on this subject, but he made a fatal mistake when he met with East Germany's minister of foreign affairs, which made him highly unpopular with the Bonn Government.

Notes

1. See No. 24 (Editorial Note). Yahil, deputy head of the Israel Purchasing Mission in Germany, was the Israeli official observer at the Berlin Conference.
2. See No. 72.

78. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 19 February 1954

Coded Tel. 379; Outg.: 130.09/2339/1

Summary

Rafael gives Eban instructions in preparation for his meeting with Azmi.[1] Immediately after the revolution in Egypt, Israel showed its good will and restraint, it proposed countless times to meet for discussion of matters at issue, and made it clear that it would view with sympathy the Egyptians' wishes that Israel exert its influence in securing economic and political aid for Egypt. All the Egyptian replies, including Nasser's letter in which he spoke of a serious review of the Suez Canal issue,[2] have been revealed as evasive and negative. In the event, Egypt has gained nothing from its rejection of Israel's overtures – the British have not evacuated the Canal Zone and American economic and military aid has not been forthcoming. Egypt must therefore understand that Israel will exert all its force to achieve its just claims. If the Egyptian government is genuinely interested in changing its policy, it is requested to do so in internationally accepted ways.

Notes

1. Azmi had come to New York at the time to represent Egypt at the debate in the Security Council on the Israeli complaint against the blockade of the Suez Canal. On his way to New York, he stopped off in Geneva and in a talk with Kahany claimed that his government had granted him extensive powers after he had convinced it that the issue of Suez should be settled through a high level meeting with Israeli representatives. He wanted to exploit this opportunity to implement his ideas of direct negotiations between Israel and Egypt, perhaps with the assistance of the U.N. secretary-general and other personalities. Rafael tended to view this as an attempt to end the dispute outside the Security Council, or at least to create a more amicable atmosphere, but suggested that as soon as Azmi arrived, Eban should make an assessment of him and arrange contact with him at a high level. (See Kahany's telegram to Sharett, 14 February 1954, and his letter to Sharett, 17 February 1954, 130.15/3772/66; Rafael to Eban, YA904, 15 February 1954, 130.09/2330/22.) For the Kahany-Azmi conversation see No. 79.
2. See Vol. 8, No. 205.

79. A. Eban (New York) to G. Rafael (Jerusalem). 20 February 1954

Notes

1. See No. 78.
2. Rafael confirmed that the reply was obviously negative, and suggested that Eban summarize their conversation in a personal letter to Azmi (see Rafael's telegram to Eban, IWA39, 22 February 1954, 130.15/3772/66.) Eban drafted a letter along the lines suggested by Rafael, but the message was apparently passed on in a personal conversation – see Eban to Rafael, WIA77, 24 February 1954, 93.01/2210/9; No. 91.

80. A. Shalev (Tel Aviv) to Major-General V. Bennike (Jerusalem). 21 February 1954

Notes

1. See No. 75 and n. 2.
2. This Article deals with the prohibition of civilians to cross the armistice lines – see Vol. 3, Appendix I.
3. See also No. 110.

81. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to G. Avner (London). 21 February 1954

Orig.: 93.04/39/21

Summary

Sharett refers to the exchange of letters between Avner and Rafael on which body should supervise the contacts with the United Nations representatives in Israel.[1] Avner proposed that the supervision over contacts with those representatives dealing with matters concerning the Armistice Agreements should be transferred from the military to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Sharett disagrees with Avner's proposal. The contacts with the United Nations representatives begin with incidents in the field and their investigation, and it is only natural that the succeeding contacts – at the meetings of the Mixed Armistice Commissions – should be directly based

on what has been elucidated at the site. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs may occasionally participate in the discussions, but no all-embracing conclusion should be made that the contacts with the United Nations representatives should be transferred from the military to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The example cited by Avner of the negotiations between the British and the Egyptians on the evacuation of the Canal Zone is not valid in this case: these negotiations are not of a routine nature, and in similar cases in Israel, such as the armistice talks, the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs appear as the principal spokesmen for Israel.

Note

1. Avner claimed that contacts with United Nations officials involved with armistice issues should be transferred to representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. To support his argument he quoted the British example whereby the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations, even though they were basically military, were carried out by Foreign Office officials. This was Avner's comment on Rafael's letter to the effect that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was aware that relations between Israel and U.N. representatives in Israel were currently perhaps the most important aspect of the state's foreign relations, and to a large extent determined the essence and character of its relations with the Big Powers, while those persons dealing with them create crises concerning irrelevant issues and complicate relations. (See Rafael to Avner, 21 January 1954, Avner to Rafael, 4 February 1954, in File 93.04/41/14. See also further correspondence on this matter between Avner and Rafael in File 93.04/39/21.)

82. G. Rafael [Jerusalem] to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 21 February 1954

Copy: 130.15/2569/1

Summary

Rafael sums up the action taken by the Bureau of Middle Eastern Affairs, of which he is the head, in respect of the events in Jebel Druse.[1] Immediately on receiving the first reports on the incidents, the Bureau tried to obtain reports from the intelligence services, but these had no information beyond to what had appeared in the press. Nevertheless, an urgent consultation was held with the General Staff of the I.D.F. in order to determine to what extent the Druse can be helped by Israel; a further consultation took place with the heads of the intelligence services. An initiative was taken to have the Druse Members of the Knesset issue appropriate declarations. In addition, contacts

were made with the missions in Rome, Paris, Ankara and Washington, asking them to obtain information and assessment of the situation in Syria. The staff of the Bureau also took part in the debate in the Knesset Committee for Foreign Affairs and Defence.[2] Possibilities are now being studied of establishing regular contacts between Israel and the Druse and also with rebellious elements in Syria led by Mohammed Safa.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 53 and n.1.
2. In a consultation that took place on 2 February, Sharett defined Israel's policy toward the minorities in the neighbouring states, in connection with events in Syria, on the basis of the following assumptions:

   There is no doubt that Israel was interested in the stability of peace in the area, but on the other hand wished to undermine the animosity and embargo against it. It was also concerned that the world should be made aware of the instability of the neighbouring countries. Israel wished to appear in the world as a state advocating justice and objecting to oppression and wished that every minority in the Middle East would be aware that it would find sympathy in the State of Israel.

   On the other hand, Israel was well aware that there was no unanimity among these minorities and they were divided into those who advocated rebellion alongside those who advocated compromise, which in most cases have the upper hand. Thus in no way could the stability of the revolutionary movements in these countries be relied upon. These considerations placed serious restrictions on Israel's readiness to accede to requests for assistance from those who would seem to be prepared to revolt with its aid, and certainly on its initiative to arouse them to revolt. The question also arised of the effectiveness of assistance Israel could give them as against the dangers it could cause them by its very appearance as their ally.

   Sharett's final conclusion was that great care should be taken in giving assistance to the revolt of a minority.

   (See information to Israel missions abroad, No. 824, 16 February 1954, 130.15/2569/1.)
3. In a conversation with Sgan-Aluf Harkabi on issues relating to a number of Arab countries, Rafael raised the idea to offer asylum in Israel to the leader of the Druse revolt, Sultan al-Atarash. It was decided that Rafael would discuss the matter with the prime minister as to whether to suggest to the Druse leaders in Israel that such a proposal be passed on. (See the record of the conversation by A. Kidron, 25 February 1954, 130.15/3749/3.)

83. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 22 February 1954

Coded Tel. 686; Outg.: 93.02/164/8

Summary

Tsur reports on his meeting with Broustrat, the director of the United Nations Department at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[1] The latter said that the French were still in two minds about submitting the draft resolution. The Americans have suggested that they join the resolution to be sponsored by New Zealand; this, they thought, would be the best solution, because it would lessen the danger of a Soviet veto. If New Zealand were unwilling to have the French join them, then, said Broustrat, France might join the United States resolution. As regards combining the Gulf of Eilat issue with that of the Suez Canal, their opinion of the illegality of the Egyptian action has not changed, but they do not see the connection between the two issues. Their main argument for this is that the legal basis applicable to these issues is entirely different: the Constantinople Convention for one and international maritime law for the other. Broustrat hinted that France would prefer the Security Council to reconfirm its previous resolution on the passage through the Suez Canal, while the Gulf of Eilat issue should be returned for discussion in the Mixed Armistice Commission.

Tsur said that the discussion in the Mixed Armistice Commission was bound to be fruitless in any case, and then the issue would return to the Security Council. He added that the only hope of avoiding a Soviet veto was in connecting the two issues, because the case of Eilat is analogous to that of the Dardanelles rather than to that of the Canal. Summing up, Tsur says that no decision was taken and he could not receive a definite answer.

Notes

1. See No. 70.
2. The reference is to two maritime incidents that took place in the Corfu Channel in 1946 in which British warships were attacked by Albanian shore batteries and hit by mines. The British argued that the Channel was an international waterway with the right of passage for all. The International Court of Justice at The Hague accepted the British argument and determined that maritime straits in the territorial seas of coastal states that constituted a connection between two larger seas are bound by the laws of freedom of passage.
3. Of September 1951.
4. The reference is to the expert opinion on freedom of navigation in the entrance to the Gulf of Eilat, prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' legal advisor prior to

the debate in the United Nations in 1951. According to this opinion, the right of passage in the Gulf of Eilat for non-belligerent purposes existed for commercial vessels of all nations according to international law and the judgment handed down by the International Court of Justice at The Hague (see n. 2 above). However, the passage of Israeli warships and warplanes was prohibited by a clause in the armistice agreement. (The opinion was sent to Israeli missions abroad again, 8 February 1954, 130.02/2409/11.)

84. M. Kidron [New York] to A. R. Perry (New York). 23 February 1954

Notes

1. A. R. Perry, New Zealand deputy delegate to the United Nations. New Zealand agreed to submit the draft resolution in the Security Council concerning freedom of passage through the Suez Canal – see No. 70 and n. 4.
2. The wording of the draft resolution, attached to this letter, not printed here, is almost identical to the wording of the draft in the appendix to No. 66, with the following differences: the term "other waterways" was replaced by "Gulf of Aqaba"; paragraph 6 of the previous version was deleted and the paragraph numbers changed accordingly; paragraphs 9 and 10 of the previous version were united into a single paragraph numbered 8 worded as follows: "Requests the secretary-general to communicate this resolution to the Government of Egypt and to report to the Security Council within sixty days on that Government's compliance therewith."

85. A. Eban [Washington] to W. Bedell Smith (Washington). 23 February 1954

Notes

1. See No. 54 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 88.

86. Consultation in the Prime Minister's Bureau (Jerusalem, 23 February 1954)[1]

Copy: 130.02/2451/10

Summary

The subject of the consultation was Israel's participation in the conference under Article XII. Those present were the prime minister, the minister of foreign affairs, the minister of defence, the chief of the General Staff, senior army officers, and officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The minister of foreign affairs opened the meeting, saying that the conference must not be turned by Jordan into a low-level meeting, and Israel must insist on the participation of high-ranking officials. If the Jordanians delegate such an official to the conference and if the secretary-general of the United Nations presides over it, then Israel will be represented by the director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Israel has already prepared the agenda for the conference; Mr. Sharett read it out to those present.[3]

The minister of defence was critical of the agenda, saying that it was fraught with risks. The debate must concentrate on concrete matters, and then the only possibility is a debate under Article VIII. However, the proposed agenda does not deal with this Article at all. The danger of the debate shifting to Article VI must be averted.[4]

The chief of the General Staff came out in support of the argument of the minister of defence, and pointed out that if the United Nations wished to become more involved and tightened the supervision, it would then propose a mechanism of its own whose conclusions would determine the future. In his opinion, there is no advantage to be gained for Israel from this conference, and he proposes that the only debate to take place be that under Article VIII.

The director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also agrees that Article VIII should be the main subject of the conference, but remarked that the secretary-general of the United Nations should be enabled to obtain some sort of achievement; therefore the debate should deal with a concrete subject. He therefore proposed a discussion on the demarcation of the border. The chief of the General Staff did not oppose this suggestion.

The discussion then turned to the importance of the role to be played by the United Nations at the conference. G. Rafael argued that the United Nations has no right to intervene in the subject matter of the discussions and that the secretary-general should only preside over the meetings in order to

bring the two sides to an agreement. The minister of foreign affairs and the minister of defence rejected this interpretation and stated that the United Nations does have the right to intervene in the essence of the discussions.

The meeting concluded with the decision that the director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would head the delegation and would be accompanied by two officials of the Ministry and a representative of the army. After the conference has been opened by the secretary-general of the United Nations, Israel's representative will request the floor and will make a declaration of a general nature, and then will propose the agenda, the main subjects being a debate on Article VII, the steps to be taken to prevent border incidents, the cessation of economic hostilities and the obstruction of communications.

A joint committee of the army and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be set up to formulate the final draft of the proposals and to examine the possibility of also proposing a non-aggression treaty.

Notes

1. The summary of the consultation was written on 7 March 1954. According to Sharett's diary (*Personal Diary*, Vol. 2, p. 373 [Hebrew]) the consultation took place on 24 February.
2. See No. 74 and n. 2.
3. The proposal contains four sections: 1. a survey of the current situation regarding the Armistice Agreement; 2. A proposal for effective methods to improve security on the border, with special stress on the prevention of border infringements and clashes; 3. A survey of the activities of the Mixed Armistice Commission; 4. Implementation of the agreements detailed in Article VIII. (The proposal is in File 130.02/2451/10.)
4. For Articles VI and VIII of the Armistice Agreement, see No. 64 and notes 5 and 6. Here the reference is apparently to Article VI of the drafts of the agreement concerning non-belligerency drawn up at the end of February 1950 that dealt, among other matters, with the rights of Jordanian residents to their lands beyond the armistice lines. (See Vol. 5, No. 112). These drafts were not signed, and deliberations on these issues continued at the end of 1950 and the beginning of 1951 – see Vol. 6, Companion Volume, Editorial Note on pp. 79–80 and No. 132.
5. At the beginning of 1954, the United Nations representatives announced their intention to change their attitude toward infiltration so that incursions carried out by civilians would not generally be considered violations of the Armistice Agreement. (See memorandum of 5 January 1954, 130.16/2949/3.)
6. This Article deals with the prohibition of civilians crossing the armistices lines.

87. A. Moore (Tel Aviv) to A. Lourie. 23 February 1954

Notes

1. In this letter, Lourie replied, on behalf of Sharett, to A. Moore, first secretary at the British embassy in Israel, regarding the stationing of a British armoured division in Jordan – No. 47. Lourie mentioned that shortly after the signing of the treaty of alliance between Jordan and Britain, Jordan had attacked Israel, and currently was refusing to meet with Israel under the auspices of the U.N. in accordance with Article XII. He pointed out to Moore that according to clause 1 of the Anglo-Jordan treaty each of the parties had undertaken "not to adopt in regard to foreign countries an attitude which is inconsistent with the alliance or might create difficulties for the other party thereto." He requested that Britain explain the irreconcilability between the policy of hostility Jordan continued to follow toward Israel and the clauses of the treaty. It was extremely difficult to accept this situation in the light of the strong and friendly relations existing between Britain and Israel on the one hand, and Britain and Jordan on the other. He requested that every effort should be made to encourage the Government of Jordan to find a peaceful solution to the existing conflicts (93.04/41/14).
2. See Vol. 8, No. 577.

88. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the United States Division. 24 February 1954

Coded Tel. WIA74; Outg.: 93.01/2210/3

Summary

Shiloah reports on the ambassador's meeting with Walter Bedell Smith, at which he was also present. The Israelis said that it was not enough for the United States to support passively a draft resolution and that leaving the initiative to smaller countries was a retreat from the American position in 1951 and from their line of action in many instances of the Israeli-Arab conflict. Such an attitude hardens the Arabs' intransigence, for which there are already proofs in practice, and whatever thoughts the Arabs might have had of moderating their attitude have evaporated.

Smith promised to transmit Israel's complaint to the secretary of state, saying that the American stance was of a mainly tactical nature.

The arming of the Arabs was then discussed in the light of the signing of the pact between Pakistan and Turkey and reports of Iraq's plan to join the pact.[1] Eban stressed that arming Iraq was a danger to Israel, in spite of there being no territorial contiguity between the two countries. Smith asked

whether Israel's stand would not be modified by the fact that other Arab states also oppose the arming of Iraq and that Iraq will be restrained by Turkey and Pakistan. The ambassador answered in the negative.

Eban then turned to Israel's demands for its strengthening and preparation to play its role in the defence of the region when the time comes. He said he has met with understanding in his talks with the heads of the armed services, and his impression is that, but for political considerations, the Pentagon would be very much in favour of increasing Israel's potential. Eban also tried to sound out Smith on the possibility of Israel's chief of the General Staff paying a visit to the United States,[3] and also mentioned the plan for offshore procurement.[2]

In his reply, Smith stressed his positive attitude towards offshore procurement[2] and said he had recommended the plan to Roger Kyes. The United States is interested in a strong and secure Israel. As to the basic talks on involving Israel in the defence of the Middle East, he is acting to persuade Ridgeway to include Israel in the itinerary of his forthcoming tour of the Middle East.[4]

Notes

1. The reference is to the joint official declaration of the governments of Turkey and Pakistan on 19 February that they were conducting negotiations for a pact between them, and reports about the intention to have Iraq and Iran join the pact within the framework of the establishment of a "Northern Tier" for economic and military cooperation. In Israel and at the embassy in Washington, apprehensions were expressed that when the United States joined this pact it would provide massive armaments to Iraq. (See Eban's evaluation in his telegram to the United States Division, 23 February 1954, 93.01/2210/3.) The pact between Turkey and Pakistan was signed in Karachi on 2 April 1954. Iraq and Turkey signed a security alliance, the "Baghdad Pact" on 24 February 1955, which later that year was joined by Britain, Pakistan and Iran. On the applications to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on this matter, see No. 102 and n. 3.
2. Offshore procurement – an organizational framework enabling the United States armed forces to purchase and store equipment from outside of the U.S., which constituted a method of military assistance for foreign countries. Israel's request to be included within this framework was approved in April 1953, but afterwards difficulties in implementation occurred.
3. Shiloah raised the issue of the visit of the I.D.F. chief of General Staff to the United States under the guidance of Sharett and the initiative of Lavon. Sharett had considered reasons against the visit, such as whether he would be received willingly because of the political balance with the Arab states, and on the other hand, reasons in favour – that the visit could correct the impression that Israel's military prestige was dwindling in the U.S. The embassy believed that the positive aspects outweighed the negative, on condition that they succeeded in ensuring that the chief of staff received an invitation, or at least would be received with due respect. (See

Lavon to Sharett, 16 February 1954, Sharett to Eban, IW35, 21 February 1954, and Shiloah to Sharett, telegram 58, 23 February 1954, all in File 130.02/2456/6.) About the visit see No. 282.

4. In the second part of the conversation, relations with China were discussed – see No. 65 and n. 6.

89. A. Eban [New York] to H. Hoppenot (New York).[1] 26 February 1954

Notes

1. Similar letters were sent to the representatives of Britain, the United States and New Zealand.
2. Paragraph 5 of this resolution states that since the armistice [between Israel and Egypt] had remained in force for nearly two and a half years, neither of the parties could claim that it was actively belligerent and use the rights entailed in such a condition, such as search and capture. See Vol. 6, Editorial Note on pp. 593–594.

90. M. Kidron [New York] to W. Borberg (New York). 26 February 1954

Note

1. See No. 79.

91. R. Shiloah (Washington) to G. Rafael. 26 February 1954

Coded Tel. WIA96; Outg.: 93.01/2210/9

Summary

Rafael reports on his talk with Azmi to whom he transmitted Israel's categorical opposition to his proposal,[1] and repeated his suggestion that the Israel ambassador in the United States be empowered to discuss with Azmi any problem arising between Israel and Egypt. Israel would prefer bilateral talks in the first stage; however, if any sort of agreement is reached at any stage, or if saving face becomes necessary, Israel would be prepared to

involve in the talks a third agent, for instance, the secretary-general of the United Nations.

Azmi replied that he appreciated Israel's position and understood that it could not be changed, but his government also adhered to its own position. If, as he assumed, a resolution is adopted reaffirming that of 1951, Egypt will not obey it. The only way to break the stalemate is to commence talking, and once you do that all sorts of possibilities are revealed. He will therefore transmit Israel's latest proposal to his government and will recommend that it be accepted.

Notes

1. See No. 79 and notes.
2. See No. 78, paragraph "e".
3. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rafael and others expressed their reservations about this sentence and argued that it was not in Israel's interest to raise Nasser's prestige throughout the world, and that the Government of Egypt should be apprised of the dangers it was facing by maintaining a situation of active belligerency. (See telegrams from Rafael to Shiloah, Nos. 78 and 86, 28 February 1954 and 1 March 1954 in File 130.09/2310/5.)
4. On 25 February, the Revolutionary Council of Egypt announced the resignation of Naguib from his offices of president and prime minister and the appointment of Nasser as prime minister. Nasser declared a state of emergency and Naguib was placed under house arrest. He was reappointed president on 27 February but Nasser retained the office of prime minister.

92. D. Hacohen (Rangoon) to A. Levavi. 26 February 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2415/22

Summary

Hacohen reports on his meeting with the Burmese deputy minister of foreign affairs, U Kyaw Nyein, with Dr. Lewin also present. Hacohen raised two issues: the opening of the Burmese legation in Israel, and Burmese support of Israel's candidacy for the UNESCO Executive Committee.

U Kyaw Nyein said he had had no knowledge of the latter matter; he promised to devote his attention to it, and Hacohen had the impression that the matter would be settled. The deputy minister said he was aware of their promise to open a legation in Israel, but in the meantime their budget has been exhausted. They have few representatives abroad, and Israel is not the only country without reciprocity in representation.

Hacohen and Lewin replied with the customary arguments, and Lewin in particular emphasized the importance of opening the legation in order to enhance Israel's standing in Asia, which would also redound to Burma's standing and would promote Israel's relations with the Asian countries in general. Hacohen mentioned the forthcoming conference of heads of governments in Colombo,[1] and Israel's wish that Burma use this forum to advance Israel's standing in Asia and especially to persuade India to establish relations with Israel, even if without the principle of reciprocity.

The deputy minister replied that he himself would probably not participate in the conference, and proposed to set up a meeting for Hacohen with U Nu to discuss Israel's request.[2]

After the meeting, Dr. Levin expressed his opinion that there was no prospect of the Burmese promoting Israel's interests in Asia at that conference.

Notes

1. See No. 187 and n. 1.
2. Hacohen met with U Nu on 5 March. Hacohen reviewed Israel's aid to Burma and especially in the military area. U Nu expressed his desire to visit Israel during the year: "Not a quick visit between two airplanes but to stay for up to a month if necessary, to see and study", David Hacohen replied that he would immediately inform his prime minister of this. (See Hacohen to the Asian Division, 11 March 1954, 130.14/2554/2; D. Hacohen, *Burma Diary*, pp. 129–136 [Hebrew].) Sharett replied enthusiastically to U Nu's wish to visit Israel and instructed Hacohen to invite him officially as a guest of the Israeli Government, "a most valued and honoured guest." (See telegram to Hacohen, No. 19, 14 March 1954, 130.09/2360/7.) U Nu paid an official visit to Israel in June 1955.

93. Editorial Note

Military Coup in Syria

On 25 to 28 February a military coup took place in Syria in the course of which President Shishakli was deposed and replaced by Hashim al-Athassi. News of events in Syria reached Israel at noon on 25 February and, at a consultation that took place on that day, Minister of Defence Lavon proposed to take up positions on the hills bordering on Syria beyond the Demilitarized Zone. The reason he gave for this proposal was the fact that Iraqi forces had crossed into Syria, which was disintegrating, and he stressed that Israel now had a one-time historical opportunity that should not be missed. Sharett requested that they should wait and see how matters

developed; if Iraqi forces did actually enter Syria this would be a revolutionary act that would justify far-reaching conclusions, but in the meantime this is only a threat and not an actual fact. He suggested discussing the matter with Ben-Gurion at the meeting set for the 27th. In the meantime it was decided to call up a reserve brigade and this was put into effect that evening.

At the consultation that took place at Ben-Gurion's home on 27 February with the participation of Ben-Gurion, Sharett, Lavon and Dayan, Lavon proposed that in the meantime I.D.F. forces be sent into the Demilitarized Zone only. As for the situation in Egypt (see No. 91 and note 4), he suggested cutting off the Gaza Strip from Sinai by an incursion into the Strip from the southern Negev. Ben-Gurion objected to an attack on Egypt. He proposed concentrating on action against Syria and agreed to the entry of I.D.F. forces into the Demilitarized Zone. Sharett asked what would happen after the army entered the Demilitarized Zone; Ben-Gurion replied that the I.D.F. would not open fire, but would retaliate if the Syrians opened fire or entered into parts of the Demilitarized Zone. Dayan pointed out that because of military considerations during the course of a battle, the I.D.F. might be forced to capture a position within Syrian territory. Sharett said that this would result in war and stated that he objected to any future plan that would end in a disgraceful disaster: this would lead to difficulties in the United Nations, and the danger of a real threat from the Powers who had signed the Three Power Declaration and the end would be Israel's shameful retreat. Ben-Gurion suggested that the entry of the army into the Demilitarized Zone be accompanied by an announcement that the anarchy in Syria forced Israel to defend its settlements, and to make it look like a temporary move, "in the meantime," in order to leave an opening for retreat if there were no alternative. Sharett objected to this as well and summed up by saying the matter would be brought to the government. (See Sharett, *Personal Diary*, vol. II, pp. 374, 376, 378 [Hebrew]; Ben-Gurion's Diary, 27 February 1954, Ben-Gurion Archives.)

The government discussed events in Syria and Egypt on 28 February. The discussion dealt in the main with Lavon's argument that Israel had missed an opportunity. He stressed Iraq's involvement in events in Syria and stated that Israel should not remain passive when a noose was being tightened around it. He added that in fact Iraq was being supported by the United States and Britain, whose aim was to reorganize the Arab world in order to involve it in the regional defence system and that Israel would now have to deal with three large blocs: Egypt in the south, the northern bloc, and Saudi Arabia. The value of an attack during the previous week would have been mainly a demonstrative act against the United States and Britain showing them that Israel would not meekly accept the creation of such a framework.

The majority of the ministers did not agreed with Lavon's appraisal of the situation. Most of them warned that intervention would unite the Arab world. Sharett summed up the deliberations by saying: "Not only did we not miss an opportunity, but we were saved from a very serious...imbroglio." He argued that the entry of the army into the Demilitarized Zone would have deteriorated into an Israeli invasion of Syria, an act that would have been construed throughout the world as an armed conflict initiated by Israel, brought about.a union of forces in Syria, provided an excuse for sending Iraqi forces into Syria and ended in a shameful retreat of Israeli forces at the demand of the Security Council. (See stenographic minutes of the government meeting, 28 February 1954.)

94. M. Sharett [Jerusalem] to A. Eban and R. Shiloah (Washington). 27 February 1954

Coded Tel. IWA68; Inc.: 93.01/2210/9

Summary

Sharett personally informs the two addressees by cable that serious consideration is being given to the possibility of the army's taking up positions in the Syrian Demilitarized Zone, in view of the internal turmoil in Syria.[1] It may possibly be stressed that this is a temporary step without the intention of aggression against Syria or of encroaching on its territory, the aim being only to be in a position to repel a possible Syrian attack. The deterioration of the internal situation in Egypt is raising a question mark in regard to that country also. The issue will come up for debate in the government on the following day.

Note

1. See Editorial Note above (No. 93). Eban replied the following day: "The justification of the I.D.F. entering the Demilitarized Zone is most feeble and will not gain any credibility because the chaos in Syria is decreasing and will not increase the danger of attack on Israel. Suggest refraining from this unnecessary and harmful escapade that will be of no benefit when weighed against the certain political loss." (See telegram WIA105, 28 February 1954, 93.01/221/9.)

95. A. Eban (Washington) to G. Rafael (Jerusalem). 1 March 1954

Note

1. A reply to this telegram was not found, but see Sharett's observations on the Soviet Union's veto on Israel's complaint in the Security Council against the blockade of the Suez Canal – No. 140.

96. E. Sasson (Rome) to A. Eban (Washington). 1 March 1954

Copy: 130.02/2431/10

Summary

Sasson challenges Eban's argument[1] that Israel's call for a conference under Article XII could have a salutary effect on the peace process. He does not disregard the positive results of this invitation, as it has disconcerted the Arabs and nullified their diplomatic success on the Qibya issue; it has also improved Israel's international standing. However, this step has not essentially changed the Arabs' position. They remain intransigent, their desire for revenge for their defeat in 1948 has not abated and the chasm between them and Israel has not been bridged.

The road to a settlement with the Arabs demands a change in Israel's policy. Israel has made numerous statements and declarations about its wish for peace, but these were intended for winning over the West, and the United States and the United Nations in particular. All Israel's motivations and moves have ignored the Arabs and their possible reactions. Look at what happened after the last initiative: instead of strengthening its surveillance of the border and thus preventing incidents, Jordan approached the members of the Arab League asking them to share the responsibility for rejecting Israel's invitation. In other words, Jordan attaches less importance to its standing in the West and in the United Nations than to its internal stability and its standing in the Arab world.

When Israel was formulating its policy towards the Arabs it should have observed closely and understood what was happening in these countries. Israel must aim at a tranquil, stable and constructive atmosphere in the Arab world, and only thus will it find a way to a dialogue with them.

Note

1. Eban rejected Sasson's claim that the timing of the Israeli initiative for the convening of a conference in accordance with Article XII was not suitable because of developments in the Arab world and the international situation. It created the impression that the initiative was only intended to bring Jordan, against its will, to the negotiating table with Israel (see Vol. 8, No. 593). Eban argued that what appeared to Sasson as having had negative results was in fact a welcome product of the initiative, such as the rapid change from Israel's feeling of bewilderment following the Qibya incident, to Arab embarrassment arising from the demand to convene the conference, or revealing to the world the obstinacy and refusal of the Arabs, that constituted the main cause of tension in the region. The Israeli request, in his opinion, was viewed as a sincere expression of concern over the situation on the borders and not as a tactical step, and even if it did not bring peace closer, perhaps it would facilitate the finding of solutions to some practical problems. In any event, it has improved Israel's standing in the United Nations and its relations with the United States. (Letter filed under 130.02/2432/3.)

97. Z. Shek [Jerusalem] to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 2 March 1954

Copy: 93.04/41/7

Summary

This is a resumé by Shek of a consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about Israel's position on the arming of the Middle East countries, and on the move to establish the Northern Tier.[1] Participating were the minister, the director-general and senior officials. The conclusions drawn were as follows:

1. Israel will not cease its propaganda campaign against the arming of the Arab states; on the contrary, the campaign will be intensified and recent developments in the Arab world will be stressed.

2. The stated policy of readiness to participate fully in Western defence plans will not change, but we should refrain from frequent declarations on this subject.

3. The minister attaches great importance to preventing the arming of the Arabs, even if this should mean that Israel risks not being supplied with arms.

4. As regards Turkey, the protests which have been lodged so far should suffice for now; propaganda against the plan should continue, and ties with Turkey should be strengthened and not weakened.

5. Efforts should be made to establish some sort of relations with Pakistan.

Notes

1. The purpose of the consultation was to re-examine Israel's stand regarding security plans for the Middle East, and especially because of progress in the establishment of the Northern Tier – the opening of talks between Turkey and Pakistan on the signing of a pact between them and the efforts to persuade Iraq to join. (See memorandum of J. Herzog, "Notes for a consultation on security in the region," 26 February 1954, 130.02/2403/18, No. 88 and note 1.)
2. An Israeli naval flotilla visited Turkey in July 1954.

98. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 4 March 1954

Notes

1. On 31 January an unofficial consultation of several Mapai ministers was held with the chief of General Staff. Dayan revealed plans for "direct action" to breach the blockade of the Gulf of Eilat by sending a ship flying the Israeli flag, and if the Egyptians shelled it – Israel would retaliate by bombing the Egyptian position from the air or by taking Ras al-Naqb. The ministers rejected the proposed plan. On 22 February the Ministerial Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence approved Sharett's proposal to test the Egyptian blockade by sending a vessel flying a foreign flag, carrying general cargo, from Haifa to Eilat as well as a ship flying the Israeli flag from a port in East Africa to Eilat. This was in the midst of the debate in the Security Council. (See M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. 2, pp. 331 and 369 [Hebrew].)
2. Eban replied that he had discussed the matter with personnel of the U.N. Department in the Department of State and succeeded in bringing the American stand closer to that of Israel. The officials stated that they were also putting pressure on Israel's behalf on the sponsors of the proposal, but Munro was adamant in his opinion that the Mixed Armistice Commission had the authority to deal with the issue of interference with shipping in the Gulf of Eilat. (See Eban to Sharett, W118, 4 March 1954, 93.01/2210/5; M. Kidron to the M.F.A., X547, 3 March 1954, 93.01/2181/11; A. Kidron to Rafael, summary of a discussion with Harkabi, paragraph 5, 25 February 1954, 130.15/3749/3.)

99. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 4 March 1954

Coded Tel. 120; Outg.: 93.01/2210/5

Summary

Eban reports on a meeting of twenty congressmen with Byroade and Bedell Smith, the subject of which was the arming of the Arab states.[1] The meeting was lively and the discussion trenchant. Smith was favourably inclined and it appeared that the congressmen's arguments impressed him; Byroade had reservations about Israel's fears regarding its security, and quoted Israeli Army personnel and the daily *Maariv* to prove that Israel's strength has not diminished.[3] They both said that preserving Israel's territorial integrity is a fundamental of the United States policy. At the end of the discussion, the members of the delegation said that they had not been convinced by the arguments of the Department of State officials and that they intended to give publicity to their reasons for opposing the supply of arms to the Arab states. Byroade said that in that case the Department would issue a counter-statement. The two officials also said that the Department was in favour of a serious program of offshore procurement for Israel,[4] and confirmed that they would not supply arms to Egypt before the Suez Canal issue was settled.[5]

Notes

1. On 3 March, some 20 congressmen met with Smith and Byroade of the Department of State to discuss the matter of arming the Arab states. (Detailed summary of the meeting in File 130.02/2414/27.)
2. See No. 88 and n. 1.
3. The reference is apparently to the editorial in *Maariv* on 24 February that called for action against Syria to exploit its current crisis. Byroade claimed that this article caused panic in the Arab world and the congressmen expressed the opinion that reference to this article was the strongest argument against Israel at this meeting. (See summary of the meeting with Smith and Byroade, above n. 1.)
4. See No. 88 and n. 2.
5. See No. 100.

100. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 6 March 1954

Notes

1. See No. 99.
2. See No. 101.

101. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 8 March 1954

Coded Tel. 119; Outg.: 130.09/2310/5

Summary

The Division is also in favour of publishing both the congressmen's statement and the Department of State's reply, on the following assumptions:

1. That the congressmen's statement is worded very strongly, in particular regarding the supply of arms to Iraq.

2. That the Department's reply will contain the terms "sovereign," and "within present boundaries" – this in view of the garbled version published in Israel, which intimated that the American reply would refer to the boundaries in connection with the Three Power Declaration. Meanwhile, the minister will protest in the Knesset against the arming of Iraq,[4] and the American-Israel Friendship League and the press will be enlisted to the same end.

The Division instructs the embassy to submit an official Note to the Department of State protesting against the supply of arms to Iraq.[5]

Notes

1. Nos. 99 and 100.
2. Section 511 of the Mutual Security Act for 1953–1954 defines the conditions for the supply of military, financial or technical aid as follows: When the president is convinced that providing such aid would strengthen the security of the United States and the recipient country agrees to join efforts for international understanding and maintenance of universal peace, to take mutually agreed action to remove obstacles to international tension, to fulfil military undertakings that it had taken upon itself, to contribute to the development and maintenance of its defence forces and those of the free world and take steps to develop its defence potential and to guarantee effective use of the aid.

3. Three Israeli nationals who, on 3 January, had been forcibly removed from a British plane that had made an emergency landing in Baghdad on a flight from Cyprus to Iran. The three were placed in custody and were released only at the end of April following the intervention of a number of governments, including the United States, the United Nations secretary-general, the International Red Cross and the International Civil Aviation Organization.
4. On 8 March, a debate was held in the Knesset on the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The minister of foreign affairs reviewed some of the issues in Israel's foreign policy, and stressed especially the dangers to which Israel would be exposed by the supply of arms to the Arab states in general, and to Iraq in particular. (See *Divrei Ha-Knesset, Knesset Reports,* Third Session of the Second Knesset, Vol. XV, meeting 387, 8 March 1954, pp. 1082–1086 [Hebrew].)
5. See No. 123 and n. 1.

102. Y. Meroz (Ankara) to the West European Division. 9 March 1954

Copy: 130.10/2563/12

Summary

Meroz analyses Turkey's position on the pact it is about to sign with Pakistan.[1] He is of the opinion that the initiative for the pact came from Turkey because of its genuine concern for the defence of the region. In contrast, Pakistan's position is purely tactical and is aimed mainly at obtaining arms from the United States. Turkey is therefore interested in investing the pact with substance by co-opting additional countries, in particular Iraq and Iran. Turkey is aware of the internal problems of these states and of Iraq's ties with the Arab League, and thus it has been acting lately to reduce tension with the Arab states; this is the background to the settling of the crisis with Egypt on the issue of the ambassadors,[2] and Turkey's refraining from adopting a position on the latest crisis in Syria.

It is still too early to see whether Israel's relations with Turkey will be harmed by the extension of the pact. It will presumably have a certain impact on these relations; a great deal depends on whether the Iraqis are wise enough not to make their joining the pact conditional on a change in Turkey-Israel relations. The Turks will presumably not agree to such a condition, but the Iraqis are probably expecting time to be on their side. On the other hand, Turkey will presumably not take the initiative in cooling off relations with Israel, firstly, because they promised not to do so,[4] and secondly, because this would not serve their interests. It is possible,

however, that there will be fewer overt expressions of friendliness on their side in the future.

Meroz does not think that Israeli propaganda in Turkey against the co-opting of Iraq would be effective; the Turks are firm in their decision and they are irritated by Israeli interference in this issue.

Notes

1. See No. 88 and n. 1.
2. On 5 January Nasser expelled the Turkish ambassador from Egypt on the grounds of "undiplomatic behaviour." The Government of Turkey demanded an official apology for the manner in which he was expelled.
3. The friendship and non-belligerency pact between Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan signed on 8 July 1937, was never formally annulled, but in fact was no longer in force.
4. Following the publication of news about the imminent signing of a pact between Turkey and Pakistan, the Israeli minister in Ankara, Fischer, complained to the Turkish Foreign Ministry against the intention to have Iraq join it. He called for a reconciliatory statement on relations between Turkey and Israel. The Turks agreed, and on 20 February the foreign minister, Köprülü, issued a statement to the effect that the pact in no way changed Turkey's policy toward any peaceful state. In an address to the Majilis (parliament) Köprülü remarked on the good relations with all countries of the Middle East, expressly mentioning Lebanon, Iraq and Iran, but not Israel. Following Fischer's protest, the Turkish minister in Israel issued a statement to the press in which he said that it had been explained to the Israeli minister in Turkey that the Turkish foreign minister's statement also explicitly included Israel. At a meeting with Eytan on 23 February the minister reiterated the fact that not only would the pact in no way impair the friendship between Turkey and Israel, but Turkey's participation in the pact was the best possible guarantee that it would never turn against Israel. (See Fischer to Eytan, 19 February 1954, 130.02/2445/13; telegrams from Fischer to Eytan, No. 268, 20 February 1954, 130.09/2289/11; from Eytan to Fischer, No. 223, 24 February 1954, 130.09/2289/10.)

103. A. Eban (New York) to G. Rafael. 10 March 1954

Notes

1. See No. 91. During the two days prior to his talk with Eban, Azmi had met with representatives at the Security Council in order to gain support for the draft resolution that would call upon Israel and Egypt to negotiate directly on the blockade of the Suez Canal under the auspices of the U.N. secretary-general or the Council's president, and to delay the debate in the Council for 15 days. He also stated that he had received instructions from Cairo to make a statement in the Council on Egypt's readiness to postpone the implementation of the recent stringent

regulations, if it would receive assurances that a "mild resolution" would be passed. The Brazilian representative expressed his readiness to work towards a resolution that would recall the 1951 resolution and that would take note of Egypt's intentions in this direction. The representatives of the Western Powers and Turkey were in favour of a proposal for direct talks. (See telegrams from Tov to the M.F.A., X574, X577, 9–10 March 1954, 93.01/2181/11; summary of the meeting of the Israel mission to the United Nations, 10 March 1954, 130.11/2511/19.)

2. In his address to the Security Council on 12 March, Azmi distinguished between a maritime blockade, prohibited by international law, and the given right of a country in a state of belligerency to examine and seize a cargo on the open seas or within its own or its enemy's territorial waters, and argued that Egypt had such rights as a result of its state of belligerency with Israel. However, he stated, that Egypt had not fully implemented its rights and reiterated his statement to the Security Council on 15 February that the Government of Egypt had decided to alleviate its restriction on vessels sailing to Israel: merchant vessels would not be blacklisted if they did not call at Arab ports on that voyage; cruise ships would be permitted to visit Arab and Israeli ports on the same voyage; shipping companies that had been blacklisted and whose vessels were not permitted to enter Egyptian waters would be re-examined. (See *SCOR, Ninth Year,* 661st Meeting, 12 March 1954, pp. 2–21.)

3. Copies of the complete report of the conversation with Azmi, written by Eban, were submitted secretly to the representatives of the Western countries on the Security Council, as well as to New Zealand, Brazil and Denmark. Its contents were also conveyed to the representative of Turkey. (See Eban's report, 10 March 1954, 130.15/3772/66.)

104. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 11 March 1954

Coded Tel. WIA140; Outg.: 93.01/2210/5

Summary

Eban transmits the gist of the Department of State's reply to the Congressmen's statement.[2] He is certain that the first draft on which he reported was edited in a hostile manner. The references to sovereignty and friendship have been left in, but the guarantee of the integrity of the present borders is connected only with the 1950 declaration. The remark on concessions for the sake of peace demonstrates that the Department, in contrast to the congressmen, does not put the blame for the present impasse solely on the Arabs. He has already cabled his recommendation for a suitable reaction.[4] The number of signatories to the congressmen's statement will increase from 22 to 40, and all the documents will then be published – the last word being with the congressmen and the expected Department of State's reaction.[5]

Notes

1. In this telegram, Eban was requested to send the letter in which the Department of State had replied to the application of the congressmen (see No. 101). The telegram also stated that the version published in *Ha'aretz* referred to "real concessions" by both parties and that there was no reference to Israel sovereignty or the supply of arms to Israel (11 March 1954, 130.09/2310/5).
2. In telegram W130 (10.3.1954, 93.01/2210/5). The letter opened with a statement that the weakness of defence of the Middle East constituted a direct threat to the security of the United States and the free world. This situation must be amended by means of the provision of military aid to the region; this had already been approved by Congress. At the same time, the United States would ensure that this aid would not upset the balance of power in the region. The letter reiterated the Three Power Declaration, and stressed that the United States was adamant in its intention to mitigate the tension between Israel and its neighbours. However, it stated that they should not be satisfied merely with gestures, but real concessions by both parties would be required.
3. No. 100.
4. In reply to the instructions of the United States Division, Eban proposed that in the light of the wording of the Department of State's letter, Israel would not gain any advantage in making it public and it should get the congressmen to react vigorously to express their dissatisfaction and lack of conviction, and wait for a further reply from the Department of State. (See Eban's cable to the United States Division, 11 March 1954, 93.01/2210/9.)
5. Sharett considered replying to the Department of State's letter in the Knesset or in the press. "To expose in all friendliness the lack of practicality and moral distortion of the restriction that arms supplied would not be used to attack Israel." But Eban advised him to wait until the receipt of Dulles' reaction to the Note Eban would submit against the supply of arms to Iraq, from which it would be possible to learn the extent to which the Department of State did intend to carry out its intention. (See Sharett to Eban, telegram 172, 21 March 1954, 130.09/2310/5; Eban to Sharett, WIA 189, 21 March 1954, 93.01/2210/5.)

105. Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 13 March 1954

Coded Tel. 153; Inc.: 130.09/2326/2

Summary

Eliashiv reports on his conversation with Appelt, East Germany's ambassador in Moscow, in which he raised Israel's demand for reparations from Germany. The ambassador discounted Minister Goldenbaum's statement[2] of the previous year and claimed that he had had no authority to make it. His country would be prepared to enter into negotiations only when

the peace treaty with Germany has been signed. Nevertheless, he could not possibly imagine that his government or any of its members had made any declarations against Israel's agreement with West Germany or demanded its annulment. They are against reparations in general, as Molotov stated in Berlin,[4] without referring to Israel's claim in particular.

Eliashiv explained that Israel's claim was not for reparations and that it should stand on its own merits even if Molotov's position were adopted. The negotiations must not be put off until after the signing of the peace treaty and this is Israel's uncompromising stand in its negotiations with Austria.[5] It is a pity that they [the Austrians] have not published an admission of their guilt, as Adenauer has done.

The ambassador replied that he personally agreed with Israel's position, but this was the unanimous stand of his government. He pointed to the campaign against antisemitism in his country and promised to transmit Israel's position to his government.

Eliashiv requests that Appelt's remark on his personal opinion be kept secret.[7]

Notes

1. Regarding reparations from East Germany – see No. 24 (Editorial Note).
2. In October 1952, Eliashiv asked the East German ambassador in Moscow, Appelt, whether the statement by Minister Goldenbaum in September that year, that his government did not object in principal to discussions about reparations, but had not taken steps in this direction because Israel had not made a formal request, was an authorized statement – see Vol. 7, No. 371.
3. In November 1953, the Government of East Germany published a statement that it would not recognize foreign obligations that the West German government had taken upon itself, such as the London Agreement and the Reparations Agreement with Israel.
4. Molotov made the statement in his opening address to the summit conference in Berlin (see No. 24 [Editorial Note]).
5. See No. 72.
6. In the first telegram, Eliashiv was sent the statement of the East German Prime Minister Grotewohl to Yahil when they met unofficially prior to the establishment of the State of Israel, according to which Germany was obligated to pay compensation to Jews wherever they might be, and to assist in the settling in Palestine of refugees from the Hitler regime. The second cable contained quotations from the East German Communist party manifesto, signed in 1945 by Pieck, Ulbricht and others, concerning the necessity for compensating peoples that had been persecuted by the Hitlerite aggression. (Cables dated 26 and 28 February 1954, in File No. 130.09/2326/1.)
7. A full report of the talk, of 15 March 1954, in File 93.39/547/2. On 10 May, at his initiative, Appelt met Eliashiv and told him that he had reported his statement in its entirety to his prime minister. The prime minister had replied that East Germany had

fulfilled its obligations under the Potsdam Agreement, and that it was unable to take further obligations upon itself at this time. Eliashiv asked what was the meaning of "at this time," but Appelt replied that he had passed on the statement precisely. (See Eliashiv's telegram to the M.F.A. telegram 214, 10 May 1954, 130.09/2326/2.)

106. Ch. Herzog (Washington) to the I.D.F. General Staff. 14 March 1954

Coded Tel. WIA149; Outg.: 93.01/2210/5

Summary

Herzog reports to the General Staff, the Ministry of Defence and the United States Division on the ambassador's meeting with Byroade and Waller to discuss current problems of security. Their agreement in principle was sought for the acquisition of 24 F-86 planes as a step in refurbishing Israel's armament. Byroade showed he was well briefed on Israel's attempts to buy planes from France and Sweden, and asked whether the present request was additional to those planned purchases. Herzog replied that the aim was to concentrate on one type of airplane.[2,3] Byroade said that he personally was in favour of this acquisition, but he would like first to consult with experts and other people.[4]

Notes

1. Copies were sent to the Ministry of Defence and the United States Division.
2. The Ministry of Defence's attitude was that efforts should be made to obtain a permit for the purchase of F-86 airplanes, but to refrain from giving an undertaking regarding the purchase of airplanes or arms in general from other countries. (See Peres to the military attaché in Washington, 6 April 1954, 130.20/2467/7.)
3. The F-86 airplane was also manufactured in Canada, but the sale of its airplanes was dependent on the agreement of the American company and the permission of the United States government.
4. Herzog reported that Elliot, director of the Department of Arms Control in the Department of State, had informed him that they were giving serious consideration to Israel's request and that he personally tended to support it, but that they required the opinion of their air attaché in Israel. (See Herzog's telegram, No. 165, 16 March 1954, 130.09/2310/9.) Eban submitted once again the request for the purchase of airplanes in his letter to Byroade on 5 April 1954 (93.08/391/1). See also No. 174, paragraph "3".

107. A. Eban (New York) to L.K. Munro (New York). 15 March 1954

Notes

1. A similar letter was sent to the representatives of the United States, Britain and France at the United Nations.
2. See No. 103 and n. 2.
3. See No. 89 and n. 2.

108. E. Ben-Horin (Washington) to the United States Division. 15 March 1954

Orig.: 130.02/3694/2

Summary

Ben-Horin reports on the meeting between R. Shiloah, the minister in the embassy in Washington, and George Barnes, chief assistant to Eric Johnston, on the eve of the latter's departure for his second visit to the Middle East.[1] Barnes replied to Shiloah's questions as follows:

1. The International Water Authority. In their opinion, its function should be to supervise an equitable allocation of water to the parties, but it is not clear if it will commence functioning after the quotas have been finally established, when its sole task will be to make urgent changes in the quotas when needed. In any case, it is not their intention to abandon the idea of this authority, but they hope that direct contacts between the parties will become more frequent with time.

2. The date for Johnston's visit has not yet been finally set. Johnston prefers an early date, before the meeting of the Political Committee of the Arab League, which is liable to adopt a resolution against the plan.

3. The purpose of the visit is to obtain the parties' agreement in principle to the tenet that the Jordan is an international river in which various states have a legitimate interest.

4. The Litani River. Johnston insists on excluding this river from the plan, saying that adopting Israel's position on its inclusion would abort the entire scheme.

5. The Jordan River diversion project.[2] According to Barnes, after the Johnston Plan has been adopted in principle, the work on the diversion channel will not run counter to the objectives of the United States.

6. Johnston's visit to Jerusalem. Washington fears that Israel may exploit Johnston's visit to Jerusalem for political propaganda concerning the city's status.

7. The Bunche Committee.[3] Barnes has spoken with Bunche and confirms what is already known to Israel's representatives, namely, that this body is an internal committee of the U.N. Secretariat established to study the subject; it will not submit recommendations or plans.

8. How to overcome the difficulties in Jordan. Barnes did not conceal their disappointment at Jordan's reaction during their first visit, and asked his interlocutors for their opinion on the influence various personages had in the Jordanian regime.

Notes

1. See No. 37 and notes.
2. See No. 28 (Editorial Note).
3. On 24 February 1954, the U.N. secretary-general announced at a press conference that he was establishing an inter-departmental commission within the U.N. Secretariat, chaired by Bunche, whose task would be to study the existing plans for the exploitation of the Jordan waters and the problems involved, and to report to the U.N. secretary-general.

109. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 16 March 1954

Notes

1. The draft resolution proposed by New Zealand concerning restrictions on shipping in the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Eilat was given to Kidron that day. The text of the draft is in No. 139 (Editorial Note). The last paragraph (6) transferred dealing with interference to shipping in the Gulf of Eilat to the Mixed Armistice Commission.
2. In his reply, Sharett instructed Eban that the first preference would be to delete paragraph 6 in the draft resolution, even if that meant the deletion of paragraph 1b, which referred to the second part of the Israeli complaint concerning interference with shipping in the Gulf of Eilat. In the case that the deletion of paragraph 1b could not be avoided, then paragraph 1a, referring to the blockade of Suez, should be deleted in its entirety, i.e., the entire quotation from the Israeli complaint, and Israel should make do with the opening sentence of paragraph 1. (See telegram TNW397, 17 March 1954, 130.09/2339/1.)

110. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 16 March 1954

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2310/5

Summary

Tekoah reports on an emergency meeting of the Israel-Syria Mixed Armistice Commission called to discuss the clash between Syrian military positions and Israeli fishing boats on Lake Tiberias. The Commission censured both Syria and Israel for opening fire during the incident; however, it adopted Israel's draft resolution, the significance of which is in effect rejection of the Syrian claim for fishing rights in Lake Tiberias, for use of the 10-meter coastal strip, and the right to obstruct Israeli fishing or any other activity in the lake. While the Commission was in session, another incident occurred when the Syrian positions opened fire on two Israeli police boats, causing three casualties. Israel requested an immediate additional emergency meeting. Tekoah requests Israel's envoys to explain in their countries of residence that Syria's compliance with the resolution would put an end to the incidents on Lake Tiberias.

Notes

1. On 11 March, heavy fire was opened from Syrian positions at al-Kursi and Kafr Aqb, on Israeli fishing boats working some 250 metres from the north eastern coast of Lake Tiberias. Israeli police boats returned fire; there were no casualties. (See Tekoah to Israeli missions abroad, 12 March 1954, 130.09/2319/4.) See also No. 75.
2. The Israel-Syria Mixed Armistice Commission was summoned to deal with complaints of both sides. The instructions to the Israeli delegation were not to be content with discussions on the incident, but to bring about a decision on the Syrian demands for fishing rights in the lake, incursions into the lake and interference with work going on there. After the vote; the Israeli representative, Arie Shalev, estimated that the resolution clearly established Israel's unquestionable rights on Lake Tiberias, including the ten-metre strip along the east bank, and its main deficiency was the prohibition of the presence of boats armed with guns in the defence area of the lake.

   In an unofficial conversation with Shalev, the Syrian delegate, Shatilah, proposed an arrangement whereby Syria would not interfere with work on the lake, on condition that Israeli police boats did not approach the eastern shore and Israel would agree to talks on fishing rights for a number of persons resident in the area. Shalev replied in the negative, saying that the Syrians should fulfil the obligations of the Armistice Agreement in full. In his conversations with the Syrian representatives, Shalev formed the opinion that the Israeli reaction, the use of guns

from the shore, made a strong impression on the Syrians and they were concerned about the future. (See Shalev's report, 17 March 1954, 130.02/2434/5.)

3. Because of the incidents at Ma'ale Aqrabim and Nahalin, the deliberations on the complaint were delayed and took place only on 29 July – see Nos. 148, 300.
4. Despite the argument that arming boats with guns was not contrary to the agreement, Israel immediately complied with the Commission's resolution and removed the guns from the boats. (See Tekoah's telegram, No. 396, 17 March 1954, 130.02/2319/4.)

111. A. Eban (New York) to L.K. Munro (New York). 18 March 1954

Notes

1. In the course of the conversation, Eban expressed Israel's opposition to the inclusion of paragraph 6 in the draft resolution (see No. 109 and note 1) while Munro maintained his objection to the deletion of this paragraph, but took upon himself to explain in the course of his address in the Council that paragraph 5 of the 1951 resolution, which denied Egypt belligerency rights, also applied to the passage to Eilat. (See Eban's telegram, X606, 17 March 1954, 93.01/2181/11.)
2. Sharett expressed his apprehension that transference of the issue to the Mixed Armistice Commission could lead to the protraction of deliberations and appeals on resolutions and, worse than that, this could prevent Israel from taking any action, such as the sending of a vessel until a decision was taken by the Commission. There was also the danger that old affairs that were still pending in the Commission, such as the Azzazmeh tribe incident and Auja evacuees, could be revived. (See Sharett to Eban, IW153, 17 March 1954, 130.09/2310/5.)
3. See No. 112 (Editorial Note).

112. Editorial Note

Massacre at Ma'ale Aqrabim

On 17 March 1954, at 11:45, at Ma'ale Aqrabim in the Negev, a bus en route from Eilat to Beersheba was attacked by gunfire from an ambush. Eleven of the travellers, including the driver, were killed, five remained alive, two of whom were wounded. The survivors testified that some of the attackers looked like Bedouin and others wore khaki, and that two entered the bus to kill survivors.

The day after the incident, a tracking unit with dogs, together with U.N. observers, went to the scene to trace footprints. On 19 March, a message was received that the commander-in-chief of the Arab Legion, Glubb Pasha, proposed sending Jordanian trackers to join the team. On 20 March two Jordanian trackers joined the group, after Glubb agreed to Dayan's condition that the Israeli trackers would enter Jordan if the footprints led to the border. Israel submitted a complaint to the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission because of the proximity of the incident to the Jordanian border (approximately 20 km. from the Jordan border and 80 km. from the Egyptian border).

On the day of the incident, the Ministerial Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee was convened, chaired by Sharett and with the participation of Chief of Staff Dayan. Following a discussion it was resolved to take political action, without going into detail. Also in a consultation held on 18 March by senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs personnel, the general opinion was that retaliation to such a blood bath would only impair the disastrous impression and would place Israel on the same level as the murderers. It would be best to use the incident for a political offensive on the Powers in order that they should apply pressure on Jordan.

In the statement drawn up by Sharett and Lavon following the discussion in the Ministerial Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, the government condemned the murderous attack in the Negev, which was carried out as a military operation, and announced that it considered this as a purely belligerent act and placed the responsibility for it on the government from whose territory the murderers were sent. (See Rafael's memorandum to Sharett, 22 March 1954, 130.02/2431/10; telegrams from Tekoah to the missions abroad, 18 March 1954, 130.09/2319/41; 19 March 1954, 130.09/2310/5; M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. 2, pp. 403–405 [Hebrew].)

113. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 19 March 1954.

Coded Tel.; 130.09/2310/5

Summary

Eytan reports that the investigation shows that the tracks lead to the Jordanian border. The trail has come to within 10 km. of the border, and the investigation continues. The following decisions have been adopted in the

meantime. First, the minister will apprise Bennike of the government's opinion on Jordan's responsibility and on the gravity of the situation. Second, Israel will approach the Security Council – it has not yet been decided whether in the form of a protest or a complaint. Third, heads of missions in Ankara, Paris, London and Washington will inform their respective foreign ministries of Jordan's responsibility and will enquire what their government's reaction would be in the face of constant and brutal attacks on their transport routes. Israel expects the Powers to remind the Jordanian government of its responsibility for the situation.[1]

Notes

1. In a further cable, Eytan sent instructions to the effect that the Powers should be requested to issue strong condemnation of the atrocious act. This directive came mainly in reply to Elath's cable that recalled the reaction of the Western Powers following the Qibya incident. Eytan proposed that he meet with Foreign Secretary Eden and demand a British condemnation of the murder, similar to that issued after the Qibya incident. (See Elath to Lourie, telegram 495, 18 March 1954; Eytan to Israeli missions abroad, 19 March 1954, 130.02/2453/6; minutes of meetings of Sharett, Eytan and Rafael, 19–22 March 1954, 130.02/2431/10.)

114. E. Elath (London) to A. Lourie. 19 March 1954

Coded Tel. 500; Inc.: 130.09/2310/5

Summary

Elath was called in by Selwyn Lloyd to discuss the Ma'ale Aqrabim massacre. The minister expressed his condolences, and said he had invited the ambassador in order to transmit his advice to the Government of Israel not to act on its own and to await the verdict of the Armistice Commission as to the guilty party. His experts tell him that the possibility that the attackers had come from the Gaza Strip cannot be ruled out, and that the responsibility must not be put on Jordan. The Jordanian government has expressed its distress over the incident, and its statement is in his view more reliable than Israel's statement on the Qibya affair.[2]

Elath replied that Israel had no doubts whatsoever that the attackers had come from Jordan. He dismissed Jordan's statement as not expressing any regrets or readiness to bear responsibility for the act, and stressed that the incident was a result of Jordan's unwillingness to cooperate with Israel. He also criticized the British for failing to persuade their ally to accept Israel's

reiterated proposals for ameliorating the situation, in spite of their special standing in Jordan. This state of affairs weakens the status of Britain as a mediator in the conflict between the two countries.

Selwyn Lloyd replied that they were doing their best and they would not like to be involved in a military conflict between Israel and Jordan. They want peace to prevail between these countries. To the question why did they not censure Jordan, he replied that they will do so if the Armistice Commission's verdict is found to be unequivocal.[3]

Notes

1. No. 113.
2. The reference is to the announcement made by Prime Minister Ben-Gurion in a radio broadcast in reaction to the Qibya operation. See Vol. 8, No. 449 (Editorial Note).
3. See No. 117 and n. 5.

115. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 19 March 1954

Notes

1. See No. 74 and notes.
2. Detailed summary of the meeting in File 130.02/2428/5.

116. Note Verbale Delivered by the U.S. Chargé d'Affaires to the Tel Aviv Liaison Office on 21 March 1954

Notes

1. Russell explained that Secretary of State Dulles instructed that the Note Verbale be sent, because on 16 and 17 March personnel at the Syrian and Lebanese embassies in Washington had expressed to the Department of State their governments' apprehension at the concentration of Israeli forces on the borders with them, as well as the recent profusion of border incidents; all this was evidence of Israel's aggressive intentions. The American ambassadors in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Israel denied the existence of concentration of Israeli forces, but reported a tense atmosphere on both sides and the fear on the part of the Arabs of Israeli retaliatory actions. (See *FRUS, 1952–54*, Vol. IX (part 1), Nos. 774–779.)

Russell also presented the Note Verbale to Bendor and in the conversation that followed, Bendor demanded that the United States react strongly to the murder at Ma'ale Aqrabim, even if the Chairman of the Armistice Commission did not support censure of Jordan, claiming lack of proof. He argued that the issue was moral-political and not a legal-police matter, and the reaction of lack of censure, both in Jordan and in Israel, could be destructive. (See the U.S. Division to the embassy in Washington, telegram 183, 22 March 1954, 130.09/2310/5.)

117. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban. (Washington). 22 March 1954[1]

Coded Tel. 176; 130.09/2310/5

Summary

Sharett informs and instructs the ambassadors in Washington, Paris and London on the Ma'ale Aqrabim case, as follows:

1. Following the trail of the attackers has not supplied proof that they have crossed the Jordanian border. At a certain point they must have separated and obliterated their tracks.

2. At the same time, the general picture definitely points at infiltration from Jordan, and Israel has indisputable proof of this, including intelligence received from informants. There have been no signs of such activity in the Gaza Strip. It is still uncertain whether these findings can be laid before the Armistice Commission because of security considerations.

3. The Armistice Commission will presumably resolve that there is no evidence implicating Jordan. The government has decided that in such an event Israel will announce that it is withdrawing from the Commission – not permanently, but as an act of protest demonstrating to the Powers the intolerable situation.

4. Everything must be done to ensure Jordan's condemnation. The U.N. secretary-general may be approached and told that the lack of an unequivocal decision to that effect by the Armistice Commission will result in loss of confidence in and breakdown of the whole armistice apparatus. Eban is requested to report immediately by cable on the steps taken.[2]

5. No matter what the resolution adopted by the Armistice Commission, it is absolutely necessary to bring the matter to the Security Council. The demand should be put to the Powers that they make a joint approach to the Security Council, as they did after the Qibya affair.

6. Should the Powers refuse to do so, the inclination is to submit the complaint in Israel's name, but no decision has been taken yet.[3]

7. Eban is requested to apprise the secretary-general of the gravity of the results should the impression that Israel is isolated prevail. Similar instructions have been dispatched to Paris and London.

8. The Department of State should be apprised of the information in para. 2 above.

9. Amazement should be expressed at the theory that the attackers might have come from the Gaza Strip.[4]

10. Israel is of course interested in a condemnation of Jordan by the United States, but an American approach to the Security Council is more important.[5]

Notes

1. Similar cables, with required changes, were sent that day to London and Paris as well.
2. On that day, Eban talked to Hammarskjöld who said that he had been most impressed by the public anxiety in Israel, but he "doubted" whether he was authorized to instruct Bennike or the chairman of the Armistice Commission how to vote. (See cable WIA201, 22 March 1954, 93.01/2210/5.) For the written application to Hammarskjöld and their face-to-face talk, see No. 119.
3. In a further cable, Sharett explained that the argument of those who objected to Israel applying to the Security Council in the event that the Powers refused to make the application was that in such a situation there would be no chance of Israel's complaint being accepted. On the other hand, there was the argument that refraining from submitting the complaint could be interpreted as Israel's lack of confidence in its justification. He asked Eban whether, in his opinion, there was any possibility of convincing another member of the Security Council to submit the complaint. Eban replied that an Israeli complaint on the murder at Ma'ale Aqrabim alone, without Bennike's support, could fail. As for the possibility of another country submitting the complaint, Eban's reply was absolutely negative. (See Sharett to Eban, telegram 184, 22 March 1954, 130.09/2310/5; Eban to Sharett, WIA205, 23 March 1954, 93.01/2210/5.)
4. These statements were made in the course of various conversations with embassy personnel, including a talk between Waller and Ch. Herzog on 18 March. (See telegram from Herzog, No. 175, 18 March 1954, 130.09/2310/9.) See also Selwyn Lloyd in his conversation with Elath – No. 114.
5. Further to this telegram, Sharett sent a personal telegram to Eban (IW177) and to Elath (No. 594): "I am faced by a major effort to restrain demands for action and much depends on your achievements" (22 March 1954, 130.09/2310/5). On the activities in the three foreign ministries, see No. 118.

118. Israel Embassy in Washington to the United States Division. 23 March 1954

Notes

1. See No. 117.
2. On 22 March, the Department of State spokesman stated at a press conference that the United States Government viewed the murder at Ma'ale Aqrabim "with deep sorrow and expresses its sympathy to the families of the victims." He added that the Department of State "recognizes the serious and distressing character of the tragedy and is carefully following the investigation of the incident by the United Nations authorities in the area." However, he pointed out that it was still too early to decide whether the Department of State would take action, and it would be necessary to wait until the United Nations observers mechanism completed its investigation and made its decision. (See U.S. Information Bulletin, 23 March 1954, filed under 130.20/2480/2.)
3. After an item to this effect appeared in the Israeli and foreign press, Tekoah was authorized in a conversation with Hutchison to inform the press that Hutchison denied that he had received threats or warnings of any kind. (See Lourie to the embassy in London, telegram 614, 26 March 1954, 130.09/2319/4; *Ha'aretz*, 26 March 1954.)
4. On 23 March, ambassadors and chargés d'affaires of seven Arab states met with Secretary of State Dulles on instructions of their governments. They charged Israel with incitement in the Middle East that was designed to prepare the ground for Israeli military action. At a special meeting between the Jordanian ambassador and Byroade, held after the latter's meeting with Shiloah, the Jordanian ambassador claimed that his government feared an Israeli retaliatory attack and requested that the Israeli ambassador be warned about it. (See *FRUS, 1952-54,* Vol. IX (part 1), Nos. 780, 781.)
5. On the talk with the secretary of state – see No. 126.
6. A full report of this conversation is contained in Ben-Horin's memorandum of 24 March 1954, 93.08/358/4. Further to this, Tsur and Elath held meetings in London and Paris. At these meetings, they were told that the involvement of the Security Council would be possible only after a decision had been taken by the Mixed Armistice Commission. (See Elath to Lourie, telegram 508, 23 March 1954, 130.09/2319/5; Tsur to the West European Division, telegram 97, 23 March 1954, 130.09/2345/4.)

119. M. Kidron (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 23 March 1954

Notes

1. On 22 March, Kidron met with Hammarskjöld and presented a personal message from Sharett. The prime minister pointed out the urgency and necessity that the Mixed Armistice Commission should make a clear and emphatic statement condemning the atrocity in the Negev. He claimed that all the evidence clearly pointed to Jordanian responsibility for the incident and warned that the prestige and authority of the United Nations in the Middle East would be harmed if the commission did not clearly place the responsibility on that country. He expressed his confidence that the secretary-general would view the matter as being in the general interest of the United Nations that justified his personal intervention and not just a reaction to one of many problems before the Mixed Armistice Commission. Hammarskjöld replied that he would give the matter his serious consideration, but in the past had not given directives to Bennike and believed that he should not do so now, especially regarding issues of the Mixed Armistice Commission that were within the authority of the Security Council. However, in the past he had given Bennike advice in order to assist him in viewing matters in their right context. Kidron reacted to the word "advice" and stressed the urgency of authoritative advice in the present circumstances. (See Eban to Kidron, WNT73, 22 March 1954, 93.01/2210/5; Kidron to Sharett, X631, 22 March 1954, 130.09/2331/10.)
2. See No. 120.
3. See No. 122.

120. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington.[1] 24 March 1954

Coded Tel. IW197; Outg.: 130.09/2310/5

Summary

Tekoah reports on the debate in the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission on the Ma'ale Aqrabim incident.[2] Israel submitted a draft resolution expressing regret at the murders committed by the Jordanians, stating that this deed constituted a violation by Jordan of the Armistice Agreement, and demanding that effective measures be taken to prevent such occurrences in future and that the perpetrators be punished. This proposal was rejected owing to opposition by the Jordanians and abstention by the chairman. The latter had prepared his reasoning in advance, claiming that there was not sufficient evidence that the attack had been carried out by

Jordanians and there was no certainty that the attack could not have been made by others. In his opinion, investigations should continue.

Everything points to the conclusion that the chairman's position had been adopted in advance. In his explanation he said that the tracks had been lost 10 km. from the border. Contrary to the accepted procedure, he made no attempt to insert amendments to the draft resolution – even though the Jordanians had tried to do so, in the hope that some sort of resolution would in the end be adopted – but the chairman hastened to announce his abstention. Tekoah's impression is that even the Jordanians were caught by surprise by the chairman's position.

Israel's decision to boycott the Commission[3] is not unethical, nor does it violate Article XI.[4] A party to the Armistice Agreement may decide to withdraw from the Commission in certain circumstances. Israel intends to submit future complaints not to the Commission but directly to the Security Council, with a copy to Bennike. The boycott of the Commission is not permanent; the conference under Article XII, and the debate in the Security Council assume much more importance in this context.[5]

Notes

1. Also sent to London, Paris and Rome.
2. This was the third session that deliberated on Israel's complaint about the murder at Ma'ale Aqrabim. The full report of the session, including the Israeli proposal for a draft resolution and the statement of the Commission chairman, Hutchison, in File 130.02/2429/6.
3. Following the vote and Hutchison's statement, the Israeli delegate expressed his regret at the vote that "not only did not condemn those responsible but was an encouragement for further aggression," and stated that "under such circumstances there was no point in further participation in the Commission," and the Israeli delegation left the meeting of the Commission.
4. Article XI of the Israel–Jordan Armistice Agreement gave the Mixed Armistice Commission the authority to supervise the implementation of the agreement and in case of dispute between the parties, the power to resolve the interpretation of its articles.
5. Following the session, and Israel's secession from the Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials met with the American chargé d'affaires, the British first secretary and the French ambassador. They stressed the anger and tension existing in Israel because of the Commission's, refusal to place the responsibility for the incident on Jordan, and the increasing feeling of helplessness, and that the Powers were following a policy of discrimination against Israel. They requested that the Powers relieve the tension by raising the issue of the situation on the border in the Security Council with the purpose of requiring Jordan to meet with Israel in accordance with Article XII. Russell, the American chargé d'affaires, replied that Israel should not have seceded from the Mixed Armistice Commission because this was not the way to appeal the resolution of an international organization. The

secession would weaken Israel's stand, and would serve Jordan as an excuse to reject Israel's demand to convene the conference in accordance with Article XII, and would make it difficult to raise the issue in the Security Council. He added that in his opinion the solution was to convene the Conference according to Article XII and he had informed the U.S. by cable accordingly on a number of occasions. The French and British representatives expressed similar reaction. (See United States Division to the embassy in Washington, telegram 207, 25 March 1954, 130.09/2310/5; Lourie to the embassy in London, telegram 605, 25 March 1954, 130.09/2319/4.)

121. E. Elath (London) to M. Sharett. 24 March 1954

Coded Tel. 514; Inc.: 130.09/2319/5

Summary

In a personal, confidential and urgent telegram Elath submits to Sharett his thoughts on the Ma'ale Aqrabim case.

1. In spite of being in the right, Israel has lost the battle in the Armistice Commission and its legal case vis-à-vis the U.N. and world opinion has weakened as a result of the chairman's abstention. Elath fears that Israel's standing in the public opinion in Britain – which has up to now followed developments with understanding and appreciation of Israel's self-restraint, and has supported Israel's demand for the conference under Article XII – may be harmed if the announcement of its boycott of the Commission is construed as a declaration of non-cooperation with the U.N.

2. If Israel's intention is to exploit its withdrawal from the Commission for urgent and decisive action at the United Nations, including the Security Council, the campaign should be coordinated between all the parties in Israel and abroad. A statement should be issued to the effect that Israel's boycott of the Commission does not signify non-cooperation with the U.N. but is intended to break the impasse at the Armistice Commission and to bring about a fundamental reform in the existing conditions by means of a debate and action at the highest levels of the U.N.

3. However, if the intention is to give Israel a free hand, the government must realize that an attack on Jordan may result in direct confrontation with British forces – which had been hinted at in his talk with Selwyn Lloyd[2] – and to action by the Powers according to the Three Power Declaration, should Israel be declared the aggressor.

4. Considering the present pro-Muslim and pro-Arab atmosphere in Washington, and Britain's efforts to preserve its last economic and strategic

footholds in the Middle East, action by Israel could unite all the anti-Israel forces which would seize the opportunity to deal Israel a telling blow.

5. Elath thinks that Israel should assess the situation correctly and put the welfare of the state before its feelings of horror at the murders. He prays that Israel will be able to restrain its feelings and to continue its progress on this difficult road with wisdom and responsibility.[3]

Notes

1. Similar to No. 117, addressed to Eban. Para 4 in the telegram to Elath is para 5 in No. 117.
2. See No. 118, n. 6.
3. Sharett dispatched to Elath a lengthy personal telegram in reply, explaining the reasons for Israel's withdrawal from the Mixed Armistice Commission:
"1. The government decided to exhaust all possibilities of diplomatic action and to consider other action only after such action and in view of its outcome.
2. The withdrawal should demonstrate the deterioration of the cease-fire regime, and the obnoxious character of the Truce Supervision Organization, underline the crisis of confidence and arouse the Powers and the U.N. to rectify the situation.
3. Israel's withdrawal is aimed at and may be used as a further justification for the Powers to convene the Security Council in order to prevent the deterioration of the Truce Supervision Organization and to reform its executive organs.
4. There is no intention to cease cooperation with the U.N. Israel has not withdrawn from the other 3 Commissions. We demand the raising of the issue in the Security Council. See the full text of my speech in the Knesset.
5. In the case of a negative response by the Powers, the government will reconsider a direct appeal to the Security Council.
6. Other action will be considered only if the government decides not to appeal to the Security Council; in this case an internal struggle will likely take place. In any case, your reasons will be considered carefully and your telegram will be placed before the government."
(Telegram No. 607, 25 March 1954, 130.09/2319/4.)

122. D. Hammarskjöld (New York) to A. Eban (New York). 24 March 1954

Notes

1. The U.N. secretary-general sent an identical reply that day to the foreign minister of Jordan, to which was appended Eban's letter of 24 February 1954, mentioned below. This correspondence was distributed among Security Council members on 31 March 1954 as U.N. document S/3180/Add.1.
2. See No. 74 and notes.

3. The secretary-general gave further explanations to this letter orally to Eban and Kidron. He said that Jordan's reply constituted a categorical refusal, and thus he could not see any possibility to continue with the initiative to convene the conference. On the other hand, he added that under more suitable circumstances it would be possible to take up the initiative once more. (See telegram from Kidron, X647, 24 March 1954, 93.01/2181/11; telegram from Eban, W212, 25 March 1954, 93.01/2210/5.)

In a press release on 25 March, Eban referred to Hammarskjöld's statement about Jordan's categorical refusal and defined it as a clearly blatant violation of the Armistice Agreement of a particularly serious nature, and announced that Israel would decide on action to be taken in the future as a consequence of this development (93.03/3007/6). For Eban's official reply to the secretary-general see No. 137.

123. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the United States Division. 25 March 1954

Coded Tel. WIA215; Outg.: 93.01/2210/5

Summary

Shiloah reports on Ambassador Eban's talk with the secretary of state; Byroade and Barnes were also present.[1]

The secretary expressed his condolences in connection with the Ma'ale Aqrabim incident.

Eban gave a resumé of developments in the spirit of the communiqué issued by Israel to the press,[2] and described the agitated atmosphere in Israel and the fact that nobody there has any doubts as to Jordan's responsibility. He explained Israel's attitude towards the Armistice Commission and its chairman.

Dulles replied that he understood Israel's arguments, but the facts did not justify formally putting the blame on Jordan. He does not think that Israel is justified in its criticism of Hutchison, the chairman of the Commission. He understands that the investigation is still under way and he hopes that Israel will resume its cooperation with the Commission.

He admitted that there has been deterioration in the general situation in the region. He had met with the ambassadors of the Arab states who had warned of the danger of an Israeli attack.[3] He had assured them that their fears were entirely without foundation, but he hopes that he will not be proved mistaken. His impression was that the Arabs genuinely believed that Israel had aggressive intentions and also that they would not be able to withstand the Israeli forces. He himself is perplexed and does not know how to

improve the atmosphere and reduce tension. He will study Israel's proposals, but he is not certain that they will contribute to an improvement in the situation. Nor can he take a position on the proposal that the Three Powers approach the Security Council and also act outside the U.N. framework before he has consulted with the French and the British.

Throughout the conversation Byroade tried to paint an optimistic picture of the situation on the borders and of Israel-Arab relations. He attempted to gloss over Jordan's refusal to meet under Article XII, and argued that there had been some easing in the Egyptian blockade of the Suez Canal. Eban refuted these claims, submitting a list of the recent incidents and attacks.

During the talk the secretary of state showed understanding and concern about the situation in the region, but also showed himself to be perplexed and uncertain about the way to bring about an amelioration. The difference of attitudes between that of the secretary and that of officials of the Near East Bureau was again most evident.[6]

Notes

1. Intention of the United States to supply arms to Iraq. (See Note from the Israeli ambassador in Washington to the United States secretary of state, 25 March 1954, 93.03/3063/10.)
2. In his talk with the secretary, Eban stated that the increasing Arab animosity could only be interpreted as preparation for a renewed attack on the sovereignty and independence of Israel. He warned that the avoidance by the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission of clearly determining the responsibility for the Ma'ale Aqrabim incident could be interpreted as authorization for killing Israelis. He stressed that the significance of the United Nations organizations' attitude to atrocious acts – the Security Council had not yet taken any action, the Mixed Armistice Commission refused to take action, and the secretary-general felt unable to take action – revealed the lack of international initiative. In order to restore some stability to the Middle East, Eban called upon the Powers to refrain from supplying arms to the Arabs, to strongly denounce the attack at Ma'ale Aqrabim and to debate in the Security Council the problems between Israel and Jordan relating to the Mixed Armistice Commission system. As for freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Eilat, ratification of international policy on this issue should not suffice, but, following the debate in the Security Council, action should be taken to implement it. (See telegram WS/1125, 25 March 1954, 130.20/2480/2.)
3. See No. 118 and n. 4.
4. See No. 103 and n. 2.
5. See No. 122.
6. See also No. 126.

124. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett. 26 March 1954

Notes

1. The decision was taken at a consultation held by the Israeli mission to the United Nations where three possibilities were examined: (a) That Israel itself should submit a complaint to the Security Council concerning the incident at Ma'ale Aqrabim; (b) That Israel should submit a complaint against Jordan regarding its refusal to convene in accordance with Article XII; (c) Not to take any action. (See summary of the meeting, No. 17, 26 March 1954, 130.20/2476/8.)
2. Sharett disagreed with Eban. Even if in the end Israel itself were to submit a complaint to the Security Council, the main point being is Jordan's refusal to convene in accordance with Article XII, under the present conditions it was duty bound to exert maximum pressure on the Powers that they themselves should raise the issue of the Ma'ale Aqrabim incident in the Security Council. Sharett objected to this proposal as well as that of returning to the Mixed Armistice Commission prior to the debate in the Security Council. The reason for this was the feeling of anger among the Israeli public and the efforts to stem the threat of emotions bursting forth. (See cable TNW404, 28 March 1954, 130.09/2312/8.)

125. E. Elath (London) to A. Lourie. 26 March 1954

Coded Tel. 532; Outg.: 93.04/40/14

Summary

Eden called Elath in and expressed his condolences over the Ma'ale Aqrabim incident. He is concerned about the situation on the Jordanian border and would like to help to improve matters. He regrets Israel's decision to boycott the Armistice Commission and requests that nothing be done which could complicate the situation still further. A few days previously his assistants had put proposals to him, among them to mediate between Israel and Jordan.[1]

He thinks this would be premature, as long as all the alternatives within the U.N. framework have not been exhausted. He has therefore decided to support the idea of submitting the security problems to the Security Council. He wishes to stress that this does not mean that he will support Israel's proposal as submitted. In his opinion, the basis for convening the Council should be Bennike's report[2] and not the Ma'ale Aqrabim incident. He intends to act in cooperation with the French and the Americans and has not yet received the Department of State's formal response to his proposal.

Elath replied that he could not form an opinion about this proposal and that his government may request more details about it. He also asked whether it was known what the American response would be, and Eden replied that while he had not yet heard from Dulles himself, officials of the Department are inclined to convene a meeting of the Three Powers rather than of the Security Council.

In conclusion Elath said that he would like to have a more general talk with Eden about Israel's security problems on other fronts. Eden replied he would be happy to see him before his departure for Geneva.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 129.
2. The reference is to the report submitted by the Chief of Staff of the U.N. Truce Observation Organization, General Bennike, to the Security Council on 24 February. The report was submitted in keeping with the Security Council resolution of 24 November following the Qibya incident, and contained a review and details of the violations of the Armistice Agreement as well as recommendations for strengthening the armistice administration. On the matter of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement, Bennike wrote that in contrast to the impression that might be gained from the recent profusion of Israeli complaints, the number of incursions from Jordan and Israeli losses had been reduced. The reasons, in his opinion, were the preventive measures taken by Jordan and the improvement in Israeli patrols along the border. However, Bennike recommended that in addition to these measures, it was essential to reach an arrangement for joint efforts of the local security forces of both parties. The report was published as U.N. document S/3183.
3. The address of the prime minister in the Knesset on 24 March in the debate on a motion for the agenda submitted by the Herut Party concerning the Ma'ale Aqrabim massacre. Sharett explained the reasons for Israel's secession from the Mixed Armistice Commission and stated that this decision in no way detracted from Israel's commitments deriving from the Armistice Agreement. However, the decision should not be interpreted as refraining from denouncing the crime in the Security Council in a debate initiated by the Three Western Powers. He added that Israel's security would depend first and foremost on its own strength and its ability to use it whenever necessary. Thus its demand must be for the supply of arms to Israel that is defending itself, and the advocation of peace and not to the Arab states that carry out and plan acts of aggression. (See *Divrei Ha-Knesset, (Knesset Reports),* Third Session of the Second Knesset, Vol. XV, pp. 1311–1312 [Hebrew].)
4. At the conclusion of the conversation, Eden commented to Elath that he was aware of the difficulties being faced by Sharett in this hour of emergency, and that Selwyn Lloyd had passed on to him Elath's statements on this issue. (See Elath to Sharett, telegram 533, 26 March 1954, 130.15/3749/4.) The reference is to Elath's comments to Selwyn Lloyd on the need to bolster up Sharett's position and that if the Powers did not express their reaction against Jordan he could not be held responsible for the consequences. (See cable from the British Foreign Office to the embassy in Tel Aviv, No. 156, 23 March 1954, PRO, F.O.371/111086.)

126. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett. 26 March 1954

Coded Tel. XA653; Outg.: 93.01/2181/11

Summary

Following a meeting with the secretary of state, Eban sums up his impressions of the position taken by the secretary:

1. The secretary is concerned about the situation, in spite of the efforts of his officials to relieve his fears and to persuade him that no action is necessary.

2. He personally believes that the attackers were Jordanians, but he is bound by legal considerations justify Hutchison's stand.

3. He does not see a solution to the problem, and he is doubtful about the ability of the Security Council to find one. He prefers the idea of the conference under Article XII. He is expecting salvation from consultations with London and Paris.

4. He is rather interested in Eban's proposal of a new Three Power Declaration, which would not confine itself to condemning violation of borders – as in the 1950 declaration – but would include other acts of hostility, such as blockade, threats, refusal to maintain contact, refusal to implement Article XII, etc.

5. He attaches more credibility to Israel's fears of Arab hostility than to Arab claims of Israel's expansionist intentions, but does not see how the United States can help because any move will only exacerbate hostile feelings.

6. With all his reservations, he is more inclined to be impressed by Israel's arguments than is usual among the professional personnel of the Department of State.

7. He is not being well briefed by his Department.

8. The impression received is that he has given up the idea of supplying Iraq with arms at this time, but this should be checked more thoroughly.

Eban requests to be notified by telegram whether it is desirable to press for a declaration by the Three Powers as in Para 4 or whether this idea, which arose during the meeting, should be abandoned.

Notes

1. See No. 123.
2. No direct reply to this telegram has been found.

127. M. Kidron (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 26 March 1954

Coded Tel. XA655; Outg.: 93.01/2181/11

Summary

Kidron reports on Eban's talk with Vyshinsky about New Zealand's draft resolution in the debate on Israel's complaint regarding freedom of navigation.

Eban said that Israel supported this proposal[1] and stressed that it constituted no violation of Egypt's sovereignty because sovereignty does not mean license to hinder international navigation. Vyshinsky said he may take the floor on Monday during the debate, but no surprises should be expected. He stressed his guiding principles: 1. the authority of the Security Council as a supreme body whose resolutions must be rigorously implemented; 2. relations between Israel and the Arab states must be peaceful and not hostile.

He complained about the composition of the Security Council, China being represented by Tsiang from Taiwan and Turkey filling the place reserved for an East European country. However, he stressed that his dissatisfaction with the Council's composition will not necessarily determine his attitude to the draft resolution.

Eban's impression is that the Soviets have no objection to the resolution per se and that Vyshinsky's reasons for not giving it his support are extraneous.

Note

1. See No. 139 (Editorial Note).

128. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to Y. Palmon (London). 26 March 1954

Copy: 93.08/413/2

Summary

Eytan comments on Palmon's letter on the importance of relations with Asia.[1] He, too, thinks that the way to improving relations with the Arab

states leads through India, Burma, and other Asian countries. Israel cannot overcome the Arabs frontally nor from the flanks (Turkey) but only from their rear. This is a long and slow journey, in particular for Israel. Certain successes have already been recorded – legations in Burma and Japan and observation points (consulates) in other countries. Progress is slow and perseverance is necessary.[2]

Notes

1. Has not been found.
2. Cf. No. 159.

129. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to E. Elath (London). 27 March 1954

Coded Tel. 622; Outg.: 130.09/2319/4

Summary

In a personal telegram to Elath, Eytan transmits information received from confidential intelligence sources.[1] On March 24, Selwyn Lloyd sent a memorandum through Suleiman al-Nabulsi to the Jordanian government, proposing an Israeli-Jordanian conference to take place in London, to be chaired by the British, in order to discuss the border situation in view of recent events and the fear of more incidents to come. Britain is greatly concerned about the situation as it is one of the signatories of the Three Power Declaration, and because of its treaty with Jordan. The memorandum was sent with the knowledge and approval of the prime minister and of the foreign secretary. Selwyn Lloyd requested that an answer be given on the following day. Eytan surmises, on the basis of telegrams received recently from the embassy in London,[2,3] that the Jordanians have rejected the proposal. Consultations are being held in Jerusalem and instructions will be cabled on the following day.[4]

Notes

1. See Political Research Division memorandum, 26 March 1954, 130.15/3745/3.
2. In this telegram, Gazit stated that the Jordanian ambassador in London, Nabulsi, had reported to his government that the British tended to believe that the Ma'ale Aqrabim incident had been carried out by Jordanians, but not by the Jordanian

government, and [Nabulsi] advised them to agree to enter into discussions with Israel. (Telegram dated 26 March 1954 in File 130.09/2319/5.)

3. On the meeting with Eden, see No. 125. In his talk with Falla, Avner was apprised of the British intention to advise their allies to raise the issue in the Security Council, although not in the form of a censure of Jordan on the murder at Ma'ale Aqrabim, but within the framework of a general debate on the situation on the Israel-Jordan border. They were also considering the possibility that the Security Council would appoint a sub-committee in which the Jordanians and Israelis would discuss practical steps to improve the situation. (See Avner to Lourie, telegram 527, 26 March 1954, 130.09/2319/5.)
4. See No. 130 and n. 1.

130. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 28 March 1954

Notes

1. Sharett sent similar directives, with required changes, to Elath. He concluded his telegram to Elath with the following sentence: "The grave prospects certainly require that the Powers become involved, first of all through the Security Council and they should demand this from the United States; we too are making such a demand." (See telegram 624, 28 March 1954, 130.09/2319/4.)
2. Article III of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement – the main article of the agreement – according to which no element of the land, sea or air military or para-military forces of one party, including non-regular forces, shall commit any warlike or hostile act against the military or para-military forces of the other party, or against civilians in territory under the control of that Party. Or shall advance beyond or pass over for any purpose whatsoever the Armistice Demarcation Lines... or enter into or pass through the air space of the other Party. On Article VIII, see No. 64, n. 5. On the violation of Article XII, see No. 122.
3. See No. 125 and n. 2.
4. In the Israel mission to the United Nations doubts were raised as to whether there was any point in reacting to Bennike's report that had not generated any reaction in the U.N., and since other developments have superseded it. But on Sharett's instructions, Israel submitted a detailed reply to the report and criticized Bennike's stand that Jordan was taking effective steps to prevent infiltration and that he had refrained from placing the blame on Jordan for the failure of the initiative to convene the conference in accordance with Article XII. (See Eban to U.N. secretary-general, 29 March 1954, 130.16/2949/3.)

131. E. Najar (Jerusalem) to J. Tsur (Paris). 28 March 1954

Coded Tel. 533; Outg.: 130.09/2345/5

Summary

Najar reports on his meeting on the previous day with Gilbert, the French ambassador, at the latter's request. Gilbert transmitted verbally the following message from the French Foreign Ministry:

1. France is not enthusiastic about Israel's initiative to raise the Ma'ale Aqrabim case in the Security Council, but will not oppose such a move.
2. The investigation should continue, and possible action by the Powers may depend on its results.
3. France's reaction will be most severe once the murderers are caught.
4. France sends its condolences to Israel.
5. France requests Israel to return to the forum of the Armistice Commission and not to wait for an invitation from the Security Council, because Israel's withdrawal obviates any possibility of a solution.

Gilbert said that he had received these instructions on Friday, and that they were not the result of a consultation between the Powers.

Najar complained that, while the Israeli ambassadors have had meetings with the British foreign secretary and the American secretary of state, no meeting has yet taken place in Paris and it is from there that this message comes. He also criticized the French message in that the only mention of the Security Council is in connection with Israel's return to the forum of the Armistice Commission: what of Article XII and the tense situation in general? The attempt to make any political action contingent on the information obtained by Israel through its investigation is also surprising. In his opinion, the form of the complaint submitted by the Three Powers after the Qibya incident would have been appropriate in the case of Ma'ale Aqrabim. Najar notes that Gilbert's reaction when reading out the message was the same as his own.

Notes

1. In an article: "The United Nations and Our Security," that appeared in the Hebrew newspaper *Davar* on 26 March, Ben-Gurion argued that the United Nations was unable to act effectively in a world torn between the two large blocs, and stated that Israel would have to divest itself of the illusion that there are forces and predisposition in the world that would guard the lives of its citizens.
2. Teheran was to be the venue of a meeting of French ambassadors in the Middle East.

132. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to the Israel Ambassadors in Washington, Paris and London. 29 March 1954

Coded Tel. IWA228; Outg.: 130.09/2310/5

Summary

The government has adopted Sharett's proposals as follows:

1. To continue boycotting the Armistice Commission for the time being.

2. Not to approach the Security Council at this stage.

3. Not to adopt for the time being any position on the possibility of Britain mediating.

4. To persevere in demanding that the Powers approach the Security Council.[1]

5. To demand that they base their approach to the Council, explicitly or implicitly, on the Ma'ale Aqrabim case and on the violation of Article XII.

6. To issue an additional statement relating to Article XII that would: (1) accuse Jordan of acting in a way certain to nullify the Armistice Agreement; (2) raise fears in Jordan of the results of its actions; (3) express astonishment at the attitude of the U.N. secretary-general.[2]

Notes

1. Eban tried to convince Sharett of the preference of an Israeli initiative in the Security Council. He and his colleagues at the embassy were convinced that the initiative of the Three Powers in the spirit of the British proposal was more dangerous than the outcome of a debate that would be held at the initiative of Israel. This was because the draft resolution that they could be expected to submit was the expression of regret at the murder at Ma'ale Aqrabim without determining responsibility, a demand that Israel return to the Mixed Armistice Commission and complete disregard of the violation of Article XII. Sharett, on the other hand, argued that if the final wording of the Powers' proposal was lacking in content or distorted, Israel could also apply to the Security Council and submit a proposal for a clause, as it desired. However, under the present circumstances, the initiative of the Powers was essential because it would be interpreted throughout the world as a demonstrative reaction to the murder and this would be a sort of salving of its stricken self-respect. (See Eban to Sharett, WIA230, 28 March 1954, 93.01/2210/5; Sharett to Eban, telegram 231, 29 March 1954, 130.09/2310/5.)
2. Sharett read out the statement at a press conference on 29 March. The "considered" wording of the statement was decided upon after a dispute between Sharett and Lavon, who advocated a strong statement accusing Jordan of unilateral annulment of the Armistice Agreement by violation of Article XII. Sharett argued, "It was

wrong to throw out the slogan of annulment of the Armistice Agreement, even as an accusation against Jordan." (See M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. 2, p. 416 [Hebrew].)

133. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington) and E. Elath (London). 29 March 1954

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2377/2

Summary

In confidential telegrams to Eban and Elath,[1] Sharett tells of his personal distress and describes the atmosphere in Israel. The lack of reaction to the Ma'ale Aqrabim murders is construed as helplessness and failure to protect people's lives, and this causes general depression. The Herut party is attempting to benefit from this situation,[2] and there are uncertainty and doubts about this policy also in his own party. There is subdued agitation among I.D.F. officers, and he also fears lack of confidence and a whispering campaign. The wiser among the public understand the correctness of the government's policy but confidence in the United Nations is at its lowest, America is thought to be hostile to Israel and London is suspected of hatching sinister plots. It is essential to use energetic and demonstrative tactics in this situation to exert political pressure, and considerations of foreign policy also require such pressure. The internal effects of the boycott of the Armistice Commission outweigh the external disadvantages. Yet another Israeli appeal to the Security Council in this situation would be a trite move which would result in further humiliation; it is therefore essential to exert maximum pressure on the Powers and not to despair in advance of its effectiveness. The murders at Kissalon have again demonstrated that the border is wide open, and local retaliatory action has therefore been authorized.[3,4]

Notes

1. Sharett composed the telegram at the end of the government meeting on 28 March after the murder at Kissalon (see below, the present document). See M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. 2, p. 417 (Hebrew).
2. On 27 March, mass demonstrations were held in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem by the Herut Party protesting the absence of government reaction to the border incidents. At the demonstration in Tel Aviv, Begin called upon the public to force the government to inflict a heavy blow on the Arab Legion, although he warned against

a second version of the Qibya incident, because the conflict was not with the civilian population.

3. See No. 134 and n. 1.
4. In a telegram sent the next day, Sharett wrote to Eban and Elath: "Am well aware that the Nahalin incident complicates matters, but you should know that it caused considerable relief and relaxing of tension throughout the country and raised the spirits of the Jewish population (30 March 1954, 130.02/2453/7).

Eban said that he understood Sharett's feelings and distress, but was sorry that the public considered the Israeli initiative in the Security Council as humiliation, and submitting a request to the Powers as a matter of honour. His experience had taught him that in contrast to the initiative of the Powers, whose concerns were not identical with those of Israel, initiative by Israel would at least guarantee the full exploitation of the strong aspects of its situation. He suggested that if the Powers acted according to the British proposal, Israel would fill the gap by submitting a specific complaint, both on the violation of Article XII and the murder at Ma'ale Aqrabim. (Telegram NTA15, 29 March 1954, 93.01/2181/14.)

134. Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Jerusalem] to the Israel Missions Abroad. 29 March 1954

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2310/5

Summary

Sharett informs the missions of the military action at the Arab village of Nahalin in retaliation for the Kissalon murders.[1] The casualties were all men, the women and children having been separated during the action. He stresses that this action was in no way retaliation for Ma'ale Aqrabim.

Note

1. On 26 March, infiltrators from Jordan killed a guard at the village of Kissalon in the Jerusalem Corridor and stole his weapon. During the night between 28–29 March, an Israeli army unit attacked the village of Nahalin in the Bethlehem region of Jordan. During the course of the attack, nine Jordanians were killed, eight of whom were in the security forces. On 30 March, an emergency meeting of the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission was held. Israel did not attend the meeting. At the request of the Jordanians, the Commission passed a resolution censuring Israel and demanded that action be taken to prevent repetition of such incidents and that those responsible be punished.

135. J. Tsur (Paris) to the West European Division. 29 March 1954

Coded Tel. 115; Inc.: 130.09/2345/4

Summary

Tsur reports on his talk with de Courcelle and Parodi on the Ma'ale Aqrabim murders. Tsur argued that their failure to bring this case to the Security Council should be seen as another demonstration of their appeasing attitude towards the Arabs. Herewith their replies:

1. De Courcelle claimed that the French were the first to urge Britain and the United States to issue a joint declaration, but the others preferred to wait for the report of the Armistice Commission.

2. The fact that the Commission has not reached a decision will lead to an impasse in any debate in the Security Council.

3. Their demand that Israel return to the forum of the Armistice Commission is not to be considered as pressure but only friendly advice. The boycott of the Commission would adversely affect Israel's case in the Security Council.

4. Contrary to what Gilbert had said, they both think that it would be preferable for Israel itself to submit the matter to the Security Council. Parodi added that Israel is mistaken in demanding that the Qibya procedure be followed here, as then Israel had admitted that a military unit had taken part in the action. Parodi said that he personally thought Israel should submit the entire problem to the Security Council, and he expressly promised France's support.

5. De Courcelle explained the reason behind their hesitation to submit a joint complaint by the Three Powers: Britain was inclined to do so, but the Department of State was against this step. It would take a long time to reach agreement between the Three, and then the Council's resolution would be lukewarm.

6. Nevertheless, Parodi – who understands Israel's position – is willing to exert renewed pressure on the United States to agree to the submission of a joint draft resolution by the Three Powers which would include the entire complex of problems and whose starting point would be Bennike's report.

Notes

1. At the Berlin Conference – see No. 24 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 125, n. 2; No. 130, n. 4.

136. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett (Jerusalem) and E. Elath (London). 29 March 1954

Notes

1. See No. 123.
2. See No. 135.
3. See No. 134 and note 1.
4. See No. 125.

137. A. Eban [New York] to D. Hammarskjöld (New York). 29 March 1954

Notes

1. See Nos. 74 and 122.
2. On 10 March, Hammarskjöld stated at a press conference that a deadline should be set for receiving a reply from the Government of Jordan and that if the Government of Jordan did not contact him soon, he himself would set the date for the conference.
3. Hammarskjöld published this statement in the *New York Times* as a consequence of a request by Eban to publish a denial at a press conference on 25 March, of this interpretation by the Jordanian foreign minister, al-Haldi, of the secretary-general's decision not to continue at the present moment with the convening of the conference. (See Eban's telegram to Sharett, No. 231, 28 March 1954, 93.01/2210/5.)

138. Y. Tekoah [Jerusalem] to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and G. Rafael. 29 March 1954

Copy: 130.02/2434/5

Summary

Tekoah draws attention to certain facts which, in his opinion, point to the advisability of resuming the work in the Jordan River bed. Firstly, the experts brought in by Bennike are about to finish their work and their conclusions – that the project will not infringe on the Jordanians' rights and the operation of the flour mills there – are favourable to Israel.[1] Secondly, no resolution adopted by the Security Council would be favourable to Israel

because it would give Syria some standing in the area. Israel would prefer to separate the Jordan Project from the Johnston Plan. The new regime in Syria has not yet decided on its attitude towards Israel in general and the water project in particular. The Syrians are also violating the U.N.'s orders not to fish in Lake Tiberias[2] and they have dug an irrigation canal on the eastern bank of the Jordan. All these facts show that this is a good opportunity to resume the work on the diversion channel. It should not take more than 10 to 14 days to complete the work in the demilitarized zone. He therefore recommends that a Note be sent to the president of the Security Council, or to the secretary-general, which would include guarantees regarding the use of the water and the land, and that the digging should be resumed. In his opinion, such a Note should be submitted even if it is decided not to resume the work, and it should then include a proviso to the effect that Israel reserves the right to resume the work whenever it sees fit.

Notes

1. These experts (Dixon from the United States and Eysvoogel from Holland) visited Israel in March 1954 as envoys of the U.N. secretary-general, at the request of the Chief of Staff of the U.N. Truce Observation Organization, Bennike, in order to examine the implications of the diversion project in the Benot Yaaqov Bridge area on the water and land rights of Arabs resident on the Buteiha farm. Following their visit to the area and meeting with Israel; water experts and Syrian experts, the two men submitted their report to the U.N. secretary-general and to General Bennike on 3 April. (Reports on their meetings in Israel, March 1954, in File 130.02/3688/9.) For the main points of their proposals, see No. 364 and note 1.
2. See No. 110 and note 2.
3. On 26 March, in consequence of discussions with the experts Dixon and Eysvoogel, the Government of Israel gave a written undertaking in a letter from the minister of foreign affairs to General Bennike, to guarantee an appropriate supply of water, in all seasons, sufficient for existing usages of water, during the course of the work on the diversion project and after its completion. (The letter, dated 26 March 1954, in File 130.02/2434/5.)

139. Editorial Note

Conclusions of Security Council Debate on the Freedom of Navigation in the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Eilat.

On 29 March 1954, the Security Council concluded the debate on the complaint by Israel concerning the blockade by Egypt of the Suez Canal and

interference with shipping in the Gulf of Eilat. A draft resolution proposed by New Zealand (U.N. Document S/3188 corr.1) recalled the Security Council resolution of September 1951 regarding freedom of navigation and expressed grave concern at the fact that the Egyptians had not complied with that resolution. Regarding the Gulf of Eilat, the resolution proposed that the issue be referred to the Israel-Egypt Mixed Armistice Commission. Eight countries voted for the proposal, Lebanon and the Soviet Union voted against and one country (China) abstained. The proposed resolution failed as a result of the Soviet objection. This was the second time that the Soviet Union had imposed its veto on an issue relating to Palestine. Following is the text of the draft resolution:

The Security Council,

1. Having considered the complaint of Israel against Egypt concerning: (a) Enforcement by Egypt of restrictions on the passage of ships trading with Israel through the Suez Canal, (b) Interference by Egypt with shipping proceeding to the Israeli port of Eilat on the Gulf of Aqaba,
2. Noting the statements made before the Council by the representatives of Egypt and Israel,
3. Recalling its resolution of 1 September 1951,
4. Notes with regret that Egypt has not complied with that resolution,
5. Calls upon Egypt in accordance with its obligations under the Charter to comply therewith,
6. Considers that, without prejudice to the provisions of the resolution of 1 September 1951, the complaint referred to in paragraph 1 (b) above should in the first instance be dealt with by the Mixed Armistice Commission established under the General Armistice Agreement between Egypt and Israel.

After the vote, the Egyptian representative stated that now the pressure of the above draft resolution had been removed, Egypt, of its own free will, would move toward tolerance.

(See *Yearbook of the United Nations*, 1954, p. 74; *SCOR, 9th Year*, 664th Meeting, 29 March 1954, p. 23.)

140. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 30 March 1954

Notes

1. See Editorial Note above. Similar telegrams were also sent to Paris and London.
2. In another telegram, Sharett explained to Eban that regarding the Gulf of Eilat, direct action did not mean only dispatching a vessel, preparations for which were well advanced, but action by force against armed opposition. He added that he still had not recommended this. (IW270, 5 April 1954, 130.09/2310/6.)
3. See No. 125.
4. See No. 142.

141. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 30 March 1954

Coded Tel. WIA242–243; Outg.: 93.01/2210/5

Summary

Eban makes three possible assumptions concerning the shift in the Soviet Union's policy on Israel at the United Nations, as manifested recently in the debates of the Security Council:[1]

1. The Soviet Union intends to render the Council impotent until its demand regarding the membership of Communist China is satisfied.

2. The Soviet Union has decided to veto any resolution opposed by the Arabs, regardless of its content.

3. The Soviet Union will veto any resolution on the Middle East initiated by the West, whether or not it favours the Arabs, and will demand a direct settlement between Israel and the Arabs without any international involvement. This decision was presumably taken in December 1953 at a Communist conference in Beirut, the proof being that the Soviets acted differently in the Qibya affair, which preceded the conference.

Eban favours a combination of (1) and (2), and the conclusion is that the Security Council is closed to any anti-Arab resolution.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 139 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 127.
3. Sharett objected to assumption (1): "It is difficult to advocate as a reason, because by this reasoning, why did they abstained on the Qibya incident" and as to

assumption (3) that "seems too extensive." He argued that assumption (2) was the main issue "and the tendency undoubtedly is not just to find favour with the Arabs but in this way to prevent the consolidation of Western defence in the Middle East and also to delay peace between Israel and the Arabs, realization of which would facilitate the organization of regional defence." (Cable to Eban, IWA266, 4 April 1954, 130.09/2310/6.)

142. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban. (New York). 31 March 1954

Coded Tel. YA61; Outg.: 130.09/2330/23

Summary

Sharett informs Eban that the Ministerial Committee for Foreign Affairs and Defence has approved the following resolutions:[1]

1. Pressure should be exerted on the Powers to decide immediately whether or not they will approach the Security Council.

2. If the decision is in the affirmative but the issues of Ma'ale Aqrabim and Article XII are not stressed sufficiently, Israel will immediately approach the Security Council itself.

3. If the answer is negative, the Cabinet Committee will convene again and decide on the next move.

At the talks regarding (1) the demand should be made to base the approach on these two matters (Ma'ale Aqrabim and Article XII) using the arguments about the veto, previously made by Sharett in No. 140. He assumes that in case (3) it will be decided that Israel will approach the Security Council immediately. Paras. 1 and 2 are for immediate action.[3]

Notes

1. Sharett convened the Ministerial Committee for Foreign Affairs and Defence on 30 March and explained the significance of the Soviet veto in the Security Council. Lavon supported Eban – to withdraw from any initiative in the Security Council – while Aranne, Rosenne and Bernstein agreed with Sharett that another and final attempt should be made, and not to hasten to cut off relations. (See M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. 2, pp. 422-423 [Hebrew].)
2. No. 140.
3. These directives were sent to Paris and London as well.

143. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 31 March 1954

Coded Tel. WIA253; Outg.: 93.01/2210/5

Summary

As instructed by Sharett,[1] Eban met with Wainhouse, Acting assistant secretary of state for U.N affairs, and Ludlow. Eban said that the Government of Israel has discussed the situation arising following the Soviet veto and requests an unequivocal reply as to whether the Powers intend to raise in the Security Council the subject of the present situation between Israel and Jordan, in particular with regard to Article XII and the Ma'ale Aqrabim murders.

Ludlow asked whether it was possible for Israel and Jordan to approach the Security Council on their own. Eban replied that this possibility has been taken into account by Israel, but that the government adheres to its proposal that the Powers initiate the action in the Council. He also stressed that Israel wishes to be briefed on the content of the West's initiative and will not be satisfied with a token action. According to Israel, the solution lies in a resolution to be taken by the Council that Israel and Jordan hold a meeting at the highest level.

A discussion then took place on the significance of the Soviet veto. The Americans thought that Vyshinsky's statement in support of direct negotiations between Israel and the Arabs was void of substance. They said they were greatly concerned about the situation where the Soviets have the power of nullifying any action in the Council; they were holding consultations with their allies and discussing various possibilities within or outside the framework of the U.N. and will communicate with Israel within two or three days.

Eban's impression is that the Americans assume that the Soviets will foil any attempt to reduce tension: they have a strong, deep and genuinely negative attitude towards the Security Council and Soviet interests are of more importance to them than any Middle Eastern issue. The Americans are therefore trying to find a substitute for the Council in the Israeli-Arab issue. They are not happy with the Israeli (and Jordanian) pressure on them to raise the matter in the Council and prefer that the parties, as sovereign states, take the initiative as they see fit. In conclusion, Eban recommends to await the Americans' reply and to emphasize the points vital for Israel in any meeting of the Council held at their initiative.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 142 and n. 1.
2. See full report of the conversation in memorandum drawn up by P. Eliav, 2 February 1954, 130.20/2480/2.

144. E. Elath (London) to A. Lourie. 31 March 1954

Coded Tel. 533; Outg.: 93.04/40/14

Summary

Elath reports on his meeting with Sir Roger Allen in accordance with instructions from Israel.[1] Allen promised to discuss Israel's proposals, but then immediately went on the attack with regard to the Nahalin affair.[2] Israel cannot take the law into its own hands and at the same time press for political action. He reminded Elath of their treaty with Jordan. Israel had gained a great deal of sympathy in his country following the Ma'ale Aqrabim incident, but its boycott of the Armistice Commission and now the attack on Nahalin have harmed its reputation. He is aware of the problems facing Prime Minister Sharett, but these cannot justify the steps taken by Israel.

Elath clarified Israel's position. Israel feels that the British have not done enough in Amman. The public in Israel finds it hard to believe that the British are incapable of restraining the Jordanians. The fact that they let the Jordanians evade their responsibilities under Article XII has made the Jordanians more impudent and has encouraged them in the belief that the British will support them no matter what they do. Elath declared that Israel wishes for peace and has no intention of attacking anybody or becoming involved in a war.

Allen replied that they are not letting up in their efforts in Amman and are trying to persuade the Americans to convene the Security Council, though they fear that it will be immobilized by the Soviets. The French have not yet replied but he does not expect difficulties from that direction.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 130 and note 1; No. 132.
2. On the previous day, 30 March, Moore of the British embassy expressed to Lourie serious concern over the attack at Nahalin. He said that this was clearly a planned and well-organized attack and warned that the result would reverse the good impression the Israeli government had made by its restraint following the murder at

Ma'ale Aqrabim. He added that he did not know what impact this would have on the British proposal to raise in the Security Council the situation on the borders and the pressure to punish those responsible. Lourie replied that this was not retaliation for the murder at Ma'ale Aqrabim, but rather a local reaction to a number of incidents in the Kissalon area, and it could not be expected that the border villages would remain passive to acts of murder and hostility. (Telegram from Lourie to the embassy in London, No. 640, 30 March 1954, 130.02/2453/7.)
3. Arabic: "The state is with us."
4. On the following day, 31 March, immediately upon receipt of instructions from Sharett (see No. 142), Elath again spoke to Allen, who stated that an intensive appraisal was in process regarding Israel's request to convene the Security Council. Elath gained the impression that even if they did apply to the Council, the incident of the murder at Ma'ale Aqrabim and the issue of Article XII would not be stressed, but that they would rely on Bennike's report and would mention in a general manner "breaches of security" that had occurred since the publication of the report. (See telegram to Lourie, No. 559, 31 March 1954, 130.09/2319/5.)

145. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 31 March 1954

Notes

1. See No. 146.
2. Shiloah left for Israel to report and for consultations – see No. 149.

146. A. Eban (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 1 April 1954

Notes

1. According to Article XI of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement, the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission would be responsible for implementing the agreement, provide interpretation in case of differences of opinion, and propose modifications in it. See No. 2 and n. 1.
2. The following day Ordonneau announced that the three Western Powers did not wish to take an initiative of their own; that after the presentation of the Lebanese complaint (see No. 147 and Note 1) they believe that Israel should lodge a complaint of her own, and then they will raise for discussion in the Council a paragraph concerning the tension on the Israel-Jordan border. (See Tov to the M.F.A., NWT86, 3 April 1954, 93.01/2181/12.)
3. Eban conveyed similar information from Wainhouse, the director of the Office of U.N. Political and Security Affairs in the U.S. Department of State. Eban suggested that this information, which was conveyed with great certainty by both the British

and the Americans, should be thoroughly checked, and if it proved to be unfounded it would be up to Israel to explain to the two Powers why it had reached that conclusion. (See his telegram to Sharett, WIA264, 4 April 1954, 93.01/2210/7.)

4. A body attached to the Security Council, comprising 14 states, including the four Powers, which was charged with observing and reporting on regions in which there was international tension. Israel was a member of this body. (See Eban to Sharett, WIA262, 3 April 1954, 93.01/2210/7.) This commission and the other bodies mentioned in the paragraph were proposed as an alternative to the Security Council which was paralyzed by the Soviet veto.

147. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett. 1 April 1954

Notes

1. On the Nahalin operation see No. 134. The complaint was lodged by Lebanon, since Jordan was not a member of the United Nations. The text of the complaint – see U.N. document S/3195 (also in file 130.16/2948/6.) Later on, the other five Arab states also endorsed the complaint.
2. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs instructed the mission to the United Nations to immediately lodge a complaint to the Security Council over violations of the Armistice – see No. 153.

148. Major-General V. Bennike to Rav Aluf M. Dayan (Tel Aviv). 1 April 1954

Notes

1. At the meeting, Dayan protested that the Syrians were continuing to fish in Lake Tiberias in contravention of the Israel-Syrian Armistice Commission resolution of March 15 (see No. 110 and the notes there), and that they had added to their complaint about the incident on March 15 the demand to discuss in the Commission the general situation on Lake Tiberias. He maintained that there was no justification whatsoever to review matters which had been discussed and decided at the Armistice Commission, but expressed willingness to discuss with the Syrians, outside the framework of the Armistice Agreement, problems they might raise with Israel. At a meeting the next day with Van Horn, the chairman of the Commission, Shalev submitted in writing Israel's opposition to a discussion of further matters, but repeated Israel's willingness to discuss practical arrangements for the utilization of the waters of Lake Tiberias, on condition that this would be within the framework of a general settlement and not within the framework of the Armistice Agreement, which did not grant such rights to the Syrians. On March 29, Bennike told Shalev that he had given instructions not to bring up this subject for discussion in the Commission again. (See correspondence in file 130.02/2434/5.)

2. In his reply, Shalev confirmed, on behalf of Dayan, readiness to meet with the Syrian government representatives, if they made such a request, in order to discuss the problem of water for the Syrian villagers living close to Lake Tiberias, or regarding any other change in the Armistice Agreement that the Syrians would suggest, on condition that the Israeli representatives would also be at liberty to raise at such a meeting topics which they considered pertinent. (See his letter to Bennike, 2 April 1954.)

149. Review by R. Shiloah [Jerusalem, 3 April 1954]

Aide Memoire:[1] 130.02/2403/13

Summary

This is a resumé of Shiloah's address at a consultation chaired by the minister of foreign affairs, with several senior officials of the Ministry participating.

1. The Middle Eastern policy of the United States is determined by the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and the President.

2. From the point of view of the general defence of America against the Soviet Union, the Middle East has only lately been accorded active treatment. The Pentagon has thus set up a special department dealing with defence plans for the Middle East; at the same time, the initiative in forming the defence plans for the region has passed from Britain to the United States – vide the recently formed Northern Tier plan.

3. For the United States, the importance of the Middle East lies not in its military potential but in its role as an arena for the deployment of forces in the event of war. Therefore, though important before the outbreak of war, oil loses its importance once hostilities begin; what they need is political stability and the friendship of the peoples of the region. In these circumstances, the Arabs are of much greater importance to them than Israel.

4. This is the reason for the present policy towards Israel which has been formed by the lower echelons in the Department of State. The policy shift has taken into account the internal factor of American Jewry and the possibility of Israeli opposition.

5. The crises of October 1953 (the Jordan River diversion project, Qibya, the suspension of the Grant-in-Aid) roused the Jewish community and brought the issue anew to the attention of the highest echelons of the Administration, who saw that no policy that did not take Israel's interests into account was practicable. This was a great victory for the embassy

personnel and for Israel's friends in the United States, and it was achieved in the face of vigorous opposition by the lower echelons in the Department of State.

6. This development culminated in Bedell Smith persuading the secretary of state to define the policy of the United States in his address to senior officials in the Department of State.[3]

7. America's policy in the Arab-Israeli conflict can be defined today as living in the hope that there will be no incidents that will force them to decide in favour of one or the other of the parties.

8. The Americans prefer to please both sides – and the Johnston Plan is an attempt to do this.

9. The decision to supply the Arabs with arms is not concerned with military considerations – it is intended to win them over. The American experts admit that Iraq has no military value whatsoever.

10. Our embassy in Washington has been making great efforts to prevent this supply of arms and has so far met with success.

11. The United States considers the supply of arms as a sign of its friendship. The Americans say that Israel's fears are exaggerated, that the Arabs are afraid of Israel, and the arms they will be given will not affect the balance of power.

12. Israel is being compensated by facilitating the purchase of arms and by off-shore procurement.[4] There are reasons for assuming that America is aiming at a deal with Israel.

13. As to a general settlement in the region, the United States has come to the conclusion that there is no prospect of peace being attained under the present circumstances, and that the social structure in the Arab states has to be changed first. There is talk of an 8 or 10-year economic plan for the Middle East which would include Israel.

In conclusion: the deterioration in relations with the United States has been arrested, but it would be a mistake to be over-optimistic. Continuous efforts are required in every case and the road ahead is not easy.

Notes

1. The summary was written by Z. Shek and addressed to the minister of foreign affairs. For more details concerning Shiloah's evaluation of the United States' standpoint, see his letter to Sharett, 9 March 1954, 130.19/4374/1.
2. The reference is apparently to the American Friends of the Middle East – a pro-Arab organization in the United States.
3. This would appear to be referring to a briefing session which Dulles held with the top echelons of the Department of State in February 1954. In the briefing, which took place at the request of Beddel Smith, Dulles affirmed the commitment of the United States to Israel's existence and its striving for stability in the Middle East,

which was conditional, he stressed, on an improvement in Israel-Arab relations. To this end, they would have to eradicate the impression that had become deeply rooted among the Arabs that the United States loathed and disdained them on the one hand, and to beware of creating the impression among them that Israel was being abandoned, on the other. The main points of the briefing in Shiloah's letter to Sharett, 9 March 1954, 130.19/4374/1.

4. "Offshore procurement" – see No. 88 and note 2.

150. Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 3 April 1954

Coded Tel. 177; Inc.: 130.09/2326/2

Summary

Eliashiv reports on his meeting with Zaitzev, Director of the Middle East Department at the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The subject was the veto cast by the Soviets in the issue of free passage through the Suez Canal.[2] Zaitzev thinks that Israel's reaction was excessive. The 1951 resolution has not produced any results and its repetition would not help either. As Vyshinsky said, he is for direct negotiations and this has always been the Soviet Union's and also Israel's position. Egypt's undertaking to make certain concessions[3] at the conclusion of the debate is a direct result of Soviet policy.

Eliashiv replied that this policy means leaving everything to the goodwill of one party, and this is the very party that refuses to enter into negotiations. He also mentioned Jordan's refusal to meet under Article XII – to which Zaitzev responded that they were in favour of such a conference.

Notes

1. The cable was not found; for Sharett's speech – see No. 125, note 3.
2. See No. 139 (Editorial Note)
3. After the vote and the Soviet veto, the Egyptian representative announced that after it was free of the pressure of the draft resolution in the Security Council, Egypt could of its own free will adopt a more moderate stand with regard to freedom of passage in the Suez Canal. (*See SCOR, 9th Year,* 664th Meeting, 29 March 1954, p. 23).

151. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to A Eban (New York). 4 April 1954

Notes

1. Of Lebanon, in the name of Jordan, and of Israel.
2. See No. 125 and note 2.
3. On this committee see No. 157 and note 3.
4. In a speech delivered in the Security Council on November 12, in the context of a debate on the Qibya operation, Eban expressed regret over the loss of innocent life but acquainted the Council with the circumstances that led to the operation – years of unceasing incursions from Arab states to Jewish settlements close to the border, for the purpose of robbery and murder. He demanded that the Council take steps as follows: to confirm that the tension on the border was the result of the lack of peaceful relations between Israel and the Arab states; to draw attention to the fact that the main aim of the Armistice Agreements to maintain a lasting peace had not been achieved; and that previous resolutions of the Security Council in this regard had not been implemented; to take due note that the source of the current tension was the infiltration into Israel; to request that the Armistice Commissions devote particular attention to the paragraphs in the agreements that had not been implemented; to call upon all the states that were signatories to them to open negotiations in order to turn them into a final peace settlement. (See Vol. 8, No. 507, Editorial Note.)

152. Editorial Note

Message from the British Prime Minister on the Situation along the Borders

On April 4, in the middle of a government meeting, Sharett received a letter from the British ambassador, Evans, containing a personal message from Prime Minister Churchill to the prime minister of Israel, dated 2 April. The text of the message is as follows:

"As a friend of Israel and the Zionist cause I feel bound to express to Your Excellency my concern at the recent serious incidents and the growing tension between Israel and her neighbours.

We shall do what we can to influence the Arab states, but we look to you to make counsels of statesmanship and patience prevail on the Israel side.

A renewal of the war between Israel and the Arabs would be a calamity. If the United Kingdom in virtue of its treaty obligations, became involved in

the war, it would be a sad ending to the hopes and achievements of the last few decades in Palestine.

I am determined for my part to do everything I can to avoid a disaster and it is for that reason that I ask you now to do everything in your power to urge on your people moderation and restraint."

Sharett read the message in Hebrew translation to the ministers. Aranne saw in the message a threat to destroy the State of Israel but Sharett thought otherwise; he interpreted the words "sad ending" as not referring to the end of the physical existence of the State but to the end of the historic chapter of contact and cooperation between Israel and Britain, and felt that the message called for a carefully considered reply. (See telegram from the British Foreign Office to the British embassy in Israel, PRO, FO371/111069, 2 May 1954; M. Sharett, *Personal Diary* Vol. II, p. 432 [Hebrew].) See also No. 156 and Sharett's reply in No. 170.

153. A. Eban [New York] to the President of the Security Council. 5 April 1954

Notes

1. The letter was published as U.N. document S/1963.
2. The memorandum was delivered on April 6 and registered as U.N. document S/3196/Add.1 (filed also on 130.16/2948/6). In addition to the mention of the murder at Ma'ale Aqrabim and the murder at Kissalon, Eban enumerated in the memorandum a further 30 incidents perpetrated by Jordanians since 24 November 1953.

154. A. Eban [Washington] to J.F. Dulles (Washington). 5 April 1954

Note

1. The remarks were made at the President's weekly news conference, in answer to a question from one of the reporters.

155. A. Eban (Washington) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 5 April 1954

Notes

1. From 4-7 December 1953 Bermuda hosted a conference of the three Western Powers at which the relations with the Soviet Union, the future of Germany and Austria and defence matters were discussed.
2. Elath reported that the British viewed favourably the convening of the Security Council over the situation on the Jordanian border in order to restore calm and to prevent further worsening of the situation, but the Americans adamantly stood by their opposition to convening the Council. He also reported a statement by British Member of Parliament Walter Elliot to the effect that it had been explained to the British delegation to the Bermuda Conference that the American policy in the Middle East was anti-Israeli, if not in its aims, then in its methods, and the Republican administration, influenced by the Department of State, was determined to continue with a pro-Arab and pro-Islamic attitude, even at the expense of Israel's interests. Elliot added that the British policy in the Middle East was intimately linked with and even dependent on the policy of the United States, and if Israel did not make efforts to improve its standing in Washington it could not expect active assistance from the British Foreign Office. (His telegram, No. 561, in file 130.09/2319/5.)
3. For further exchange of opinions see No. 225 and Note 1.

156. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to E. Elath (London). 5 April 1954

Coded Tel. 683; Outg.: 130.09/2319/4

Summary

Sharett cables instructions to Elath for his forthcoming meeting with Eden. The assumption is that two subjects will be discussed: problems of regional defence and current issues.

As to the first, Elath should avoid creating the impression that he has been influenced by Churchill's message.[1] He should mention all the points in Sharett's telegram[2] and state that the latest developments – the Northern Tier, with the possibility of Iraq joining it, and the approaching British evacuation of the Canal Zone – lend weight and urgency to the proposals about Israel joining a Middle Eastern defence scheme[3] discussed by Britain and Israel two years previously. Elath should remind Eden that Israel has proposed to have the I.D.F. strengthened and trained for a regional role, to have the communications system in the area expanded, and to set up military

installations and provide bases. No definite answer to these proposals has been received by Israel. No new proposals should be put forward by Elath; if Eden has new proposals, Elath's answer should be that they will be transmitted to his government.

As to the second subject, Elath should refer to Churchill's message and say that Israel appreciates his attitude and personal concern and that the prime minister will reply in the same spirit. Astonishment should be expressed at the very idea of a war between Israel and Britain. Britain's responsibility should be stressed – as based on its treaty with Jordan – to cause the Jordanians to cease the incitement and the border incidents. Eden should be asked what Britain's final decision is on the debate in the Security Council, and he should be reminded of Israel's call for a conference under Article XII. The opportunity should also be taken to make a stern statement about the negative role played by the Truce Supervision apparatus and about Bennike personally.[6]

Notes

1. See No. 152 (Editorial Note).
2. This telegram was not found.
3. This refers to proposals made by the Israeli representatives in talks held in Israel at the beginning of October 1952 with a British military delegation on the possibility of Israel joining a regional defence scheme. In spite of repeated appeals by the Israeli representatives, Britain did not reply to the proposals. (See Vol. 7, No. 385).
4. The Anglo-Jordanian agreement – see No. 152 (Editorial Note).
5. On 31 March the Israel-Egypt Mixed Armistice Commission condemned Egypt for the wounding of an Israeli soldier and the kidnapping of a second soldier in an incident that took place near Kisufim on 25 March, and demanded the return of the kidnapped soldier. The Egyptian representatives announced that they were lodging an appeal to the Special Committee attached to the Mixed Commission, whereas Israel opposed this, maintaining that the Armistice Agreement allowed an appeal only with regard to fundamental issues. General Bennike accepted the Egyptian position, and the Commission's resolution remained pending until the end of the appeal. The kidnapped soldier was returned to Israel only on 14 July, and on the same date Israel returned to Egypt an Egyptian soldier held since 2 April. (See also No. 245, Note 1.)
6. On the Eden-Elath conversation, see No. 157.

157. E. Elath (London) to M. Sharett. 6 April 1954

Coded Tel. 577; Inc.: 130.09/2319/5

Summary

Elath reports on his meeting with Eden, who took the initiative by asking Elath whether he had read Churchill's message to Sharett,[1] stressing that he himself had had no part in its composition. Elath replied that the message has been received in Israel and accorded serious consideration and that Sharett's reply was forthcoming. As to the message's content, he asked how they could entertain the very idea of a war between Britain and Israel. Eden replied that even between friends there are circumstances in which it is better to be forewarned than to have regrets afterwards. He said that Israel has no better friend than Churchill, and that Israel should accept the message in the spirit in which it was sent. He himself is keeping in touch with the situation and wishes to find a solution. He is also active in Jordan and his efforts there are as strenuous as those he is exerting towards Israel.

Eden then turned to the subject of the Security Council. Their intention is to convene the Council for a debate not only on the details of the incidents but on the issue of security in general. They intend to submit a draft resolution for the appointment of a sub-committee chaired by the secretary-general on which Israel and Jordan will also be represented, to discuss practical measures to secure the borders and to strengthen the Truce Supervision apparatus without publicity.[3] He criticized the system of retaliatory attacks and said it would not solve anything and would only lead to Israel's deeper entanglement. He requested that Israel condemn the Nahalin action and punish those responsible.

In his reply Elath expressed his appreciation of Eden's efforts, but said Israel is disappointed with Britain's appeasing attitude towards Jordan. Israel is aware of the difficulties they are facing in that country, but there is not a soul in Israel who believes that the British cannot stop unrestrained incitement and aggressive acts on the part of Jordan. Owing to Britain's special status in Jordan, Israel considers it responsible in a large measure for the deterioration of the situation. Israel insists on convening a conference under Article XII, but will seriously consider any proposal for a plan which could bring about an improvement of the situation. As to what Eden said about the Nahalin action and about punishing those responsible – it would appear that Britain does not properly appreciate the tension prevailing in Israel: As long as the government cannot prove to the people that the United Nations and the Powers are sincerely interested in preserving Israel's security, there will be no moral basis for the step recommended by Eden.

The meeting lasted for almost an hour and concluded with the understanding that they would meet again to discuss issues of regional security in general.[4]

Notes

1. See No 152 (Editorial Note).
2. No. 156.
3. Eban had heard this idea previously in a conversation with a friend close to the American administration. According to this, the Western Powers were about to propose the establishment of a sub-committee composed of the U.N. secretary-general, the head of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization Bennike, a Jordanian representative, an Israeli representative and a representative of a friendly member state of the Security Council and not of one of the big nations, who would report. This sub-committee would discuss the situation on the border; and in the meantime the Security Council would suspend its sessions for an unlimited amount of time. The advantage of this committee was that the Soviets and their right of veto would be absent from the discussions, and it would be presented to Israel as a kind of substitute for the conference according to Article XII, which Israel so desired. (See Eban to Sharett, WIA262, 3 April 1954, 93.01/2210/7.)
4. Following Elath's report, an exchange of letters between Lavon and Sharett took place. Lavon protested over Elath's positive reaction to the proposed substitute for a conference according to Article XII and over his lack of reaction to Eden's demand to punish those responsible in the Nahalin operation. Sharett replied that in the first instance Elath had acted according to his instructions in a briefing he sent him (see No. 156). And in any event there was no chance that the Security Council would adopt a resolution obliging Jordan to have recourse to a conference convened at the initiative of Israel, but only a resolution that would oblige both Israel and Jordan to meet. On the second matter Elath had not been given any particular briefing, but his reply had been entirely one of self-respect and in accordance with the line adopted by the government and the Israel missions abroad. (See Lavon to Sharett, 12 April 1954; Sharett to Lavon, 20 April 1954, both in file 130.02/2446/11.)

158. Sh. Divon (Paris) to the West European Division. 7 April 1954

Coded Tel. 136; Inc.: 130.09/2345/4

Summary

Divon reports on his meeting with Fernand Laurent, the rapporteur of the Defence Committee which is discussing Israel's request for the purchase of tanks,[1] and with Maurice Schumann. Laurent said there was a difference of

opinion between the Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs as to the conclusion reached by the Committee – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs claiming that the decision was that negotiations should not yet begin on the sale of tanks to Israel.

Schumann, who representes the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Committee, explained the difficulties France is facing in its international relations because of the aid it is extending to Israel. Nevertheless, he agrees in principle for negotiations to begin soon with the Ministry of Defence for the purchase of those tanks, stressing that this does not mean that his Ministry will automatically authorize the sale even after the contract has been concluded: the final decision will depend on the political situation.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 31 and notes 1, 2.
2. See No. 165.

159. D. Hacohen (Rangoon) to W. Eytan. 7 April 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2415/31

Summary

Hacohen refers to Eytan's letter to Palmon,[1] who has been dealing with Israel's relations with Asian countries. He attaches great importance to the continent of Asia and supports the efforts Israel is making to gain a standing there, but he is doubtful whether the path to bridging the gap between Israel and the Arab states leads through Asia. He cannot think of any Asian state, or even an Asian statesman, willing to undertake this task; even if one could be found, he cannot understand how Asian pressure would be more effective than all the previous attempts to appease the Arabs or to overcome their intransigence.[2]

Notes

1. No. 128.
2. In his reply Eytan explained his ideas which had been greeted with approval by Palmon. Until a short while before Israel had only looked to the Western nations, and the Arabs, knowing that Asia was closed to Israel, felt secure in their rear and could concentrate on the "enemy" to their west. However, if Israel established relations with Asia, the Arabs would find themselves in the middle of a world that

viewed Israel as a nation like any other, and in such a situation the Arab interest would not enjoy such unreserved support as it currently received in Asia. (See letter to David Hacohen, 17 May 1954, 130.02/2415/31.)

160. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (New York). 8 April 1954

Notes

1. Three naval initiatives suggested at the meeting of the Ministerial Committee for Foreign Affairs and Defence on April 5 in a discussion concerning the direct action at the entrance to the Gulf of Eilat, following the veto cast by the Soviet Union in the Security Council. (See M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. II, pp. 434–435 [Hebrew].)
2. In reply to Sharett's telegram concerning direct action (see No. 140 and note 2), Eban agreed that if they sent a ship, they would indeed have to use as much force as required in order to bring it to the port, but provided that the onus of using force was clearly Egyptian.(Telegram W272, 5 April 1954, 93.01/2210/1.)

161. G. Rafael [Jerusalem] to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 8 April 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2384/14

Summary

Resumé of Rafael's address and proposals at the consultations held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 6 and 7 April.

1. Two facts have become apparent in Israel's international relations: increasing Arab enmity, and the loosening of the bonds of friendship with the United States.

2. The tension on the Jordanian border is a cause of great concern to both the Jordanians and the Powers. The Arab statesmen fear that the Powers will support Israel's demand to put an end to this situation by a change in their policy and agreement to hold direct talks, which would result in their being forced to recognize Israel within its present boundaries. They also fear that the Powers will support Israel's opposition to the return of refugees. They are therefore not willing to prejudice their future position in negotiations by making any concessions in advance.

Four factors could act as levers to change the existing situation: (a) Arab fear of forceful action by Israel; (b) the Powers' fear of war breaking out between Israel and the Arab states; (c) the Soviet tactics, which have rendered the Security Council impotent and have drawn the Arab-Israeli conflict into the Cold War; (d) Israel's efforts to settle the conflict peacefully. The Arabs' fear of Israel coupled with the impact of the Powers' support of Israel's demand for direct negotiations, produce the conditions for a change in the situation. Israel should therefore act to feed the Arabs' fears, but without thereby risking international support. On the other hand, it should attempt to concentrate its political efforts in order that the Powers' concern should express itself in international action which the Arab world would consider as support for Israel's political demands. The developments of the last few weeks, both in Jordan and in the Western capitals, point to the existence of good prospects for the success of these tactics.

3. In presenting Israel's demands to the world, stress should be laid on the basic contradiction between Israel's policy, which considers the Armistice Agreements as a commitment both to end hostilities and to move towards a peace settlement, and that of the Arabs, which views these agreements as permitting the continuation of the war against Israel by all means available, short of overt hostilities.

4. Israel's demand for direct negotiations should be viewed as a test of the Arabs' readiness to contribute towards improving the situation.

5. If Israel is successful in reducing tension, an interim and partial settlement with the Arabs, a sort of modus vivendi, may become possible. Our efforts should be aimed at this, and not only at a comprehensive and total settlement. The following conditions are necessary for this to happen: (a) the Powers' guarantee of the territorial status quo; (b) Israel's willingness to give appropriate guarantees against its territorial expansion; and (c) effective efforts to solve the refugee problem by settling them in the Arab countries, within the framework of a development program supported by the Powers, and the payment of compensation by Israel.

6. In addition to the above, there are current issues to be solved on the following lines:

(a) On the Egyptian front, Israel's right of free navigation and secure borders should be implemented.

(b) On the Syrian front, Israel's sovereignty over Lake Tiberias must be defended, and Syrian fishing in, and access to, Lake Tiberias should be settled through negotiations. The work on the Jordan River diversion should be resumed, and guarantees given in respect of water rights.

(c) On the Jordanian front, security on the border should be improved and cooperation should be achieved through the implementation of Article XII.

(d) Efforts should be made to have Bennike replaced and to limit the scope of intervention by the U.N. staff by encouraging direct negotiations.

7. Israel's security policy should be re-examined to see whether it is suited to the demands of a long period of no-peace-and-no-war. In this connection, the nature and effectiveness of retaliatory actions should be thoroughly examined.

8. Israel's public relations activities should be intensified.

Note

1. See also the summary of Tekoah's remarks in these consultations – 11 April 1954, 130.02/2453/6.

162. Sh. Rosenne (Jerusalem) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 8 April 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2384/14

Summary

The following is Rosenne's resumé of his opinions as to the principal causes of the present state of affairs:[1]

1. The reason for the decline in authority of the Armistice Agreements is that they were intended, from their inception, to be short-term arrangements leading to a permanent settlement. The fact that no political progress has been achieved since 1949 has caused their deterioration.

2. Public opinion in Israel should be taken into account. There is no consensus on how to respond to the situation; this debate has internal significance and should also be exploited for the purposes of foreign policy.

3. The opinion prevails in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that Israel has a political grievance which should be exploited as an important political asset. This opinion is correct and can be used for encouraging various external agents wishing to take political initiative through the Security Council. In any case, this feeling of grievance should not be allowed to abate. The boycott of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission was a step in the right

direction, and withdrawal from the other Armistice Commissions should be considered in appropriate circumstances.

4. At this stage, Israel is not interested in the continued existence and strengthening of the Truce Supervision apparatus, which has proved to be a divisive factor between Israel and the Arabs.

5. It is hard to agree with the line adopted by the "activists" who call for "controlled tension", even if this is intended only for the political sphere. Israel needs a long period of tranquillity. The constant tension is a weapon of our enemies and we should not cooperate with them. It should also be noted that maintaining constant tension is possible when those responsible for it are in absolute control of all the factors and can manipulate it as they wish. History shows that this line may bring success in the short term but its final result is disaster.

Rosenne sums up with two conclusions, which he calls "tentative":

1. The Ministry should study and analyse popular feeling in Israel more accurately, so that our representatives abroad can assess it correctly. The Ministry should also show more initiative in shaping public opinion in matters pertaining to it.

2. With regard to political activity, Israel should demand publicly and privately of the Powers that they involve the Security Council not just as a lower court which issues opinions on the situation, but as an organization entrusted with peacekeeping. Such a demand will gain the sympathy of those to whom the standing of the United Nations is of importance, among them the secretary-general and the entire U.N. apparatus.

Notes

1. See also No. 161.
2. On 12 November 1953, at the start of the debate in the Security Council on the Qibya operation.
3. This refers to an attempt made during the seventh session of the U.N. General Assembly to pass a resolution calling on Israel and the Arab states to enter into direct negotiations – see Vol. 7, Companion Volume, Introduction, pp. xix-xx.

163. Meeting of the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations (New York, 9 April 1954)

Minutes: 130.03/1962/9

Summary

Eban reports on his meeting with Azmi of the Egyptian Delegation. He informed him that Israel is intending to implement its right of free passage through the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Eilat. Israel hopes to do this unhindered, as it intends to defend this right – in the Gulf in particular.[1] Eban did not explicitly say whether the reaction to an obstruction would be military or political, but the intimation was clear that Israel would do everything in its power to clear the passage for ships sailing to Israel.

Azmi said they had already declared twice that they would allow the passage of food and medicines.[2] He also requested the Israelis to refrain from cries of triumph whenever an Israeli ship passed through the Gulf, because the Egyptians have a problem of prestige.

Eban replied that Israel insists on free navigation, which means free trade. The arms it imports do not come from Africa, but this fact detracts nothing from its legal rights.

Azmi told Eban about his meeting with Vyshinsky, which presumably took place around the same time as Eban's meeting with him.[3] Vyshinsky spoke derisively of the 1951 resolution concerning freedom of navigation and stressed that the problem lay in the fact that the Security Council was itself without legal standing because Nationalist China was represented on it. He emphasized that resolutions should generally be implemented, but only if the body adopting them was legitimate.

During the conversation Eban told Azmi of the British claim, also embraced also by the Americans, that it appeared that the Ma'ale Aqrabim murderers had come from Egypt.[4] Azmi became angry and said this was intended to clear the Jordanians of guilt and to cast it on Egypt.

Notes

1. Eban met with Azmi at his suggestion in order to warn him about Israel's intention to send a ship through the Gulf of Eilat (see No. 160) and on Rafael's intructions, to give him this information, but without explanations and without handing over a letter. (See telegrams from Eban to Rafael, W248, 31 March 1954, 93.01/2210/9; from Rafael to Eban, TNWA 411, 4 April 1954, 130.09/2339/1.)
2. See No. 150, note 3, No. 139 (Editorial Note).
3. See No. 127.

4. See No. 146 and note 3.
5. The reference is to the complaint lodged by Egypt to the Security Council at the beginning of February concerning violations of the Armistice Agreement by Israel in the Auja Demilitarized Zone as well as the establishment of an Israeli settlement in the area. See No. 54 (Editorial Note), Eban's letter to the president of the Security Council, 4 February 1954, 130.02/2405/3.
6. In the second part of the session a discussion was held on other matters and it is not printed here.

164. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to J. Tsur and Sh. Divon (Paris). 9 April 1954

Notes

1. On 2 April, I.D.F. forces were active in the Gaza Strip. During the operation an Egyptian soldier was abducted in reaction to the non-return of a kidnapped Israeli soldier (see No. 156, note 5) and an Egyptian officer and two Egyptian soldiers were killed. On the night of the 8-9 April there were four instances of attacks by armed Egyptians who penetrated 3–5 kilometers into Israeli territory. They attacked a house in the settlement of Shuva, and in the three other cases they attacked cars from an ambush. In the attacks, one Israeli soldier was killed and five wounded. The Armistice Commission condemned both Israel and Egypt for these operations. (See. M. Sharett, *Personal Diary,* Vol. II, p. 431 [Hebrew]; "In the Armistice Commissions and on Israel's borders," Bulletin 68, 14 April 1954, 130.15/3744/2.)

   In the afternoon of 9 April, there were verbal exchanges between Sharett and Lavon on ways of reacting to the Egyptian ambushes of the previous night. Sharett said that this had been a reaction to a reaction and saw no point in Israel reacting once again. Lavon replied that he had thought of a response that did not involve bloodshed, such as blowing up a bridge. Sharett retorted that there was no certainty that everything would go according to plan and that the operation might go awry. The subject came up at the government meeting on 11 April. Lavon explained the gravity of the matter in that it was the first instance of an Arab army entering Israel territory on a military operation. Sharett repeated his view that it was an act of reaction by the Egyptians. (See Sharett, *Personal Diary,* Vol. II, pp. 446-447 [Hebrew], stenographic minutes of the government session, 11 April 1954.)

   On the other hand, in a consultation held in the Ministry of Foreign of Affairs on 12 April, Sharett entered into an acute argument with those who were totally opposed to the reaction and whose stand was one-sided and stemming from the international point of view. He insisted upon the factor of morale, and drew a distinction between military morale, which could be disregarded, and that of the settlers which had to be taken into consideration. The government was responsible for the people it had settled in those places, and any blow to their morale had to be avoided. The restraint following the incident at Ma'ale Aqrabim had aroused a sharp reaction in Israel, whereas after the Nahalin action there had been a sigh of relief. Although the retaliatory actions had to be kept to a minimum and restrained, there

was no chance that Israel would now adopt a line of non-reaction. There were grounds for thinking that such reactions would cause the Arabs and also the Powers to look for an overall solution to the problem of the situation on the borders. However, in any case, care must be taken to avoid a response that would go beyond striking directly at the nest of attackers, as for example in the Qibya operation, whose drawbacks outweighed its benefits. (See summary of the remarks of the minister for foreign affairs in a consultation that took place in the M.F.A. on 12 April 1954, 130.15/3753/7).

2. See No. 166 and note 2, and No. 167.

165. J. Tsur (Paris) to the West European Division. 9 April 1954

Copy: 93.02/164/2

Summary

Tsur reports on his meeting with French Minister of Foreign Affairs Bidault. Tsur stressed the gravity of the situation in the Middle East and Israel's fears of further deterioration. He said the Powers must adopt a clear position and issue an emphatic declaration – whether within the framework of the Security Council or outside it – which would demonstrate that they are well aware who is the stable and peace-seeking factor in the region and warn the Arabs against aggression.

Bidault replied that he understood Israel's fears and supported its position in principle. He claimed that the problematic situation in the region was caused by the vacillating policy of the United States, which changes its position daily, and by the naivety of Dulles, who is a man of integrity and goodwill but whose attitude towards the Arabs is childish and naive, and who also exaggerates their power. Nor do the British keep to a steady line and some of the officials there still think in imperialistic terms. France, on the other hand, has adopted a very clear position. It will oppose any attempt at appeasement at Israel's expense and will in no way permit any changes in the borders that are detrimental to Israel. He thinks that it is the duty of France to strengthen Israel, as far as this is possible within the context of consultations between the Three Powers. France has also to take into account the balance of power between Israel and the Arabs so as not to arouse belligerent feelings.

Bidault raised the issue of the sale of tanks to Israel.[1] He said he had authorized it both verbally and in writing, but Maurice Schumann, the representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the National Defence

Committee, opposes it for some reason. He promised to deal with the matter himself.

Tsur met Schumann later in the day and learned that Bidault had kept his promise and told Schumann of his decision.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 158.
2. On April 15 the French Ministry of Defence announced to the purchasing mission of the Israeli Ministry of Defence its willingness to begin negotiations for the sale of tanks to Israel "without a final commitment." Tsur considered this as important progress, but noted that any agreement achieved with the Ministry of Defence would require the approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the reservation was intended apparently to give the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs the opportunity to delay the deal should the circumstances in the Middle East warrant this. Summing up the negotiations in this affair, Tsur wrote that the defence authorities had all along tended to approve the deal. The delay came from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The change in the attitude of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs came as a result of the forceful intervention of Bidault and following the estimation that Israel was in military danger. (See telegrams from Tsur, 15 April 1954, 25 April 1954, 130.09/2345/4; his letter of 16 April 1954, 130.10/2522/21.)

166. M. Kidron (New York) to M. Sharett. 12 April 1954

Coded Tel. XA709; Outg.: 93.01/2181/12

Summary

Kidron reports on his meeting with Azmi, at which he read out to him, on Sharett's instructions,[1] the message from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Azmi became agitated and said that he could not accept the message. He has no authority ("qualité") to accept such a formal message. His meetings with the Israelis have been on a personal plane and in contravention of the instructions he received from Cairo four weeks ago, and he is putting himself in jeopardy by holding them.[2]

Notes

1. This telegram (of 9 April, 130.02/2453/20) contains the instruction to convey the message in No. 164 in New York and Washington.

2. There were similar problems with conveying the message in Washington and Paris. Tsur tried to deliver the message via the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but the latter refused, fearing that that the Egyptians would refuse to accept it from them. Tsur got the impression that the French reaction was positive with regard to the conclusions, but was reserved with regard to the sharpness of the text. In Washington, Ben-Horin delivered the text of the message in writing, together with an accompanying letter, to his regular contact man in the Egyptian embassy, Samir Ahmed. Two days later Samir returned the message with an apology saying that he had received an instruction from the Egyptian chargé d'affaires to do so since "the content of the message was so important and delivered at such a high level that he did not feel himself at liberty to receive it in order to convey it to his government." (See telegrams from Tsur to the M.F.A., 10 April 1954, 130.15/3744/2; Ben-Horin to Rafael, 13 April 1954, there.) See also No. 167.

167. J. Tsur (Paris) to M. Sharett. 12 April 1954

Coded Tel. 641; Inc.: 130.09/2345/4

Summary

Tsur admits his mistake in handling the transmission of the message to Egypt,[1] but points out that the instructions he had received were unclear. In any case, he has been promised that he can consider the approach through the French Foreign Ministry as having never been made. In the meantime Divon met with Okasha, the Military Attaché, who promised to transmit the contents of the message to Egypt.

Notes

1. Sharett reprimanded Tsur for trying to deliver the message through the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (see Nos. 164 and 166, n. 2) and added that this "obstructs everything. We did not instruct, not even in one word, to involve a foreign agent in this matter. The intention was a direct submission to the Egyptian Embassy, I am afraid that an unfortunate misunderstanding has occurred between us". He concluded with an instruction "not to do anything until further instruction. (See telegram 600, 11 April 1954, 130:15/3744/2.)
2. From October 1952 Abd-al-Rahman Sadiq served as a press attaché in the Egyptian embassy in Paris and as a liaison with Divon to convey messages between Israel and the Egyptian government.
3. See No. 171.

168. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett (Jerusalem) and E. Elath (London). 13 April 1954

Coded Tel. NTEA16; Outg.: 93.01/2181/12

Summary

Eban reports on the debate at the Security Council.[1] The Arabs are in great fear of any general debate that could conclude with a firm call to the parties to enter into direct negotiations on the border situation. This fear was provoked by the firmly worded section of Byroade's address on the urgency in finding a solution to the security problem,[2] and by the rumours from London of Eden's and Dulles's efforts to arrange a meeting between Jordan and Israel.[3] On the other hand, Soviet support of the Arabs is overt and comprehensive, their tactics being to separate the complaints, to veto any general resolution, and to censure the Nahalin action.

In their efforts to ensure a procedural debate and to appease the Arabs, the representatives of the Western Powers are inclined to condemn the Nahalin action sharply, equating it with the Qibya case. Vyshinsky refuses to put to the vote any procedural resolution, estimating that any delay will favour a resolution closer to the Arab point of view.

In his talks with the various representatives, Eban has criticized the Council's impotence and stressed that Israel would not tolerate a condemnation of the Nahalin affair if it were not accompanied by a condemnation of Arab aggression and of Jordan's evasion of a meeting under Article XII. Abstention would even be preferable to a condemnation of any sort. The Americans see the course of events as proving their view of the uselessness of the Security Council and the correctness of their inclination to seek a solution not involving the Council. Israel should encourage this approach.

Notes

1. At the Security Council meeting on 12 April the procedural debate regarding the agenda which had begun on 7 April continued, and centred then on the Arab demand, supported by the Soviets, to hold a separate debate on the complaints of Israel and the Arab states, as against the Western demand to hold a general debate on the situation on the borders. The Brazilian representative made a procedural proposal, whereby a general debate would be held without commitment as to the nature of the resolution, which could be joint or individual with respect to each and every complaint. In this session too, no decision was reached and the procedural debate continued the 22 April (See *SCOR, 9th Year,* 665th–666th Meetings, 8 April, 12 April 1954.)

2. On 9 April, H. Byroade gave a lecture in Dayton, Ohio, to the Council for World Affairs on "The Middle East from a New Perspective."After presenting the issues as seen by the Israelis and the Arabs, he offered advice to both sides. He advised Israel to consider itself as a Middle Eastern state, and not as the nucleus, so to speak, of a worldwide grouping of peoples of a particular religious faith who must have special rights within and obligations to the Israeli state, and to rid itself of the belief that force and a policy of reprisal were the only language the Arabs understood. He advised the Arabs to accept Israel as an established fact and to stop making efforts to maintain a state of affairs delicately suspended between peace and war – while at present desiring neither. (See Information to Israel Missions Abroad, 28 April 1954, 130.20/2480/3.)
3. See No. 172.
4. In Eban's meeting with the heads of the major Jewish organizations on 15 April, they discussed the situation on the Jordanian border, the debate in the Security Council and Israel-US relations, paying particular attention to Byroade's speech. It was agreed that American Jews would understand Israel's attitude if it maintained that although it did not have a policy of retaliation, nonetheless the retaliation would come if the Arabs did not stop their aggression, but on condition that the acts of retaliation were limited in scope, carefully planned and coordinated, and accompanied by a sensible information campaign which would present Israel as defending itself and reacting, not as the aggressor. It was also decided that the organizations would each contact Byroade separately and protest his comments concerning relations between the Jews and the State of Israel. (See telegram from New York, XA729, 16 April 1954, 93.01/2181/12.).

169. F.E. Evans (Tel Aviv) to W. Eytan. 13 April 1954

Notes

1. See No. 125, note 2.
2. After Israel's withdrawal from the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission, following the Commission's resolution on the Ma'ale Aqrabim incident, Israel also ceased its participation in the meetings of local commanders, which had taken place regularly on the whole since March 1951 on the basis of written agreements (Local Commanders' Agreement) which were renewed with certain alterations every few months. (See the survey on meetings of local commanders, 15 April 1954, 130.02/2431/10.)
3. Evans presented this document on the instruction of the British Foreign Office and after consulting with his American and French colleagues. A similar appeal made by the Americans before this to renew the meetings between the local commanders as a way to solve the problems along the border had proved unsuccessful. Dayan maintained that the Jordanian representatives at the meetings of the commanders were low-ranking and lacking in authority, so that it was impossible to make effective arrangements with them. (See Evans to Falla, 13 April 1954, PRO, FO371/111078; *FRUS, 1952-54,* Vol. IX (part 1), No. 790.)

The Israeli reply to this appeal was sent only on 30 July (in a letter dated 29 July; Evans had been informed about it verbally by Eytan a few weeks previously). Eytan asked that this reply of 29 July to the 11-point memorandum of 19 June (See No. 302) also be considered an answer to the proposal concerning the Local Commanders' Agreement, and explained that Israel had not replied sooner because it was clear that the matter was part of a broader problem, and that it was not possible to deal with it except in the latter context. (See Eytan to Evans, 30 July 1954, 130.02/2431/11.)

170. E. Elath (London) to W.S. Churchill (London). 13 April 1954

Notes

1. Sharett cabled the following message in answer to one from Churchill (see No. 152, Editorial Note) on 8 April (telegram has not been found). Elath had intended to deliver the message on 13 April, the date marked on the telegram, but delivered it a day earlier at Eden's request.
2. Eden made these remarks when he announced in Parliament on 31 March, in reply to a parliamentary question, that Britain would be obliged to rush aid to Jordan if it became embroiled in a war. At the same time he stressed that the British commitments in accordance with the British-Jordanian agreement of 1948 did not obligate it to any action on its part at this time. (See *Ha'aretz*, 1 April 1954.)
3. Churchill replied to the message in a letter dated 23 April. He noted that he had always firmly striven for friendly relations and cooperation between Israel and Britain. According to the information in his possession the Jordanian government was doing its utmost to curb the incidents on the border. He stressed that Britain was the judge of its commitments to Jordan, but would not forego any opportunity to use its influence to solve the problems affecting both sides in a peaceful manner. Meanwhile, he wrote, it was clear that the policy of retaliation and the boycott of U.N. institutions would only increase the fear of the Arab governments, and would delay their willingness for a settlement with Israel. Therefore, and in Israel's own interest, he felt it his duty to call on Sharett to exercise moderation and patience, and he felt encouraged by Sharett's promise that he and his colleagues would try to exercise restraint. (See Churchill to Sharett, 23 April 1954, PRO, FO371/111070; Elath to Sharett, telegram 203, 27 April 1954, 130.09/2319/5.)

171. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 14 April 1954

Coded Tel. 316; Outg.: 130.09/2319/5

Summary

Eytan informs Eban in a strictly personal telegram that there has apparently been a lack of coordination in respect of Israel's message to Egypt,[1] and that Shiloah, on his own initiative,[3] has approached Russell with a similar request to set up a meeting between senior army officers of the two parties. In the meantime, the Egyptians have replied in the affirmative, and Israel is now obliged to do likewise, though efforts are being made to postpone the meeting at least until the 19th. In the meantime, consultations are taking place.[4] In order to avoid creating the impression with the Americans of a lack of coordination on Israel's part, a message will be sent thanking them for their mediation and informing them that Israel is willing to have the meeting to take place.

Notes

1. No. 164.
2. See *FRUS 1952-54*, Vol. IX (part 1), No. 793.
3. Shiloah denied that he made such a suggestion to Russell and it had not occurred to him that the latter would interpret his words as a proposal. However in answer to a question, he replied, as a private individual, that the Egyptian government should know that Israel would not tolerate any further disturbances and they must return to a scrupulous observance of the agreement and find a way for a direct and responsible contact with Israel to this end. The details of the misunderstanding were ironed out in an exchange of telegrams between Shiloah and Sharett – see Sharett to the Israel embassy in Paris, telegram 614, 15 April 1954, 130.09/2345/6; Shiloah to the minister of foreign affairs, 15 April 1954, 130.09/2345/4.
4. See No. 177.

172. E. Elath (London) to A. Lourie. 15 April 1954

Coded Tel. 598; Inc.: 130.09/2319/5

Summary

Elath spoke with Sir Roger Allen, who told him of Dulles's talks in London.[1] Dulles did not bring any plan with him for solving the problem of relations between Israel and the Arabs. Relations between Israel and Jordan were discussed solely from the security aspect. It was agreed to act jointly to repair the situation on the border by means of an absolute condemnation of acts of reprisal and by taking steps to improve the implementation by Jordan of the Armistice Agreement. Eden and Dulles came to the conclusion that a face-to-face meeting between the two parties was necessary. The immediate aim in bringing the issue before the Security Council is to appoint a sub-committee that will bring Israel and Jordan to the conference table; however, as Jordan will not agree to meet Israel face to face, it will be necessary to co-opt to the conference the other Arab states having armistice agreements with Israel, and perhaps several more members, for instance, Brazil. In any case, any relation of this conference to Article XII should not even be hinted at, otherwise the Jordanians will back off. Even if the conference is a success, the actual implementation in the field will rest on the local commanders.[3] If the Soviets veto this proposal, other ways must be found to have Jordan and Israel meet. Allen concluded by stressing that it is of the utmost importance that Israel cooperate in this plan, and intimated that Israel's response in such a situation will have considerable impact on its relations with the two Powers, no less than with Jordan itself.[4]

Notes

1. Dulles came to London and after that to Paris in order to discuss with the British and French governments a joint policy in Indo-China and to coordinate the West's policy prior to the Geneva summit which was due to convene at the end of April and which had the Far East and Germany on its agenda. At the first meeting on 12 April, Israel-Arab affairs were discussed and, according to newspaper reports, it was decided to adopt a firm policy in order to prevent the border dispute between Israël and Jordan from deteriorating into a war.
2. See No. 157.
3. See No. 169 and notes 2 and 3.
4. For Sharett's reaction to these remarks see No. 175.

173. Z. Argaman (Bucharest) to the East European Division. 15 April 1954

Coded Tel. 156; Inc.: 130.09/2296/13

Summary

Argaman reports that he has been informed by reliable sources that about a hundred detainees were put on trial last month for Zionist activity, among them several leaders of the Romanian Zionist movement. Most were accused of treason, Zionist activity, and contacts with the Israel legation. The spate of trials continues, and they are conducted in total secrecy – presumably in order not to arouse world public opinion. Argaman thinks that Israel should react immediately and most vigorously, first through the Jewish and general press and then by means of a protest movement in Israel.[1]

Note

1. Following this telegram the East European Division instructed the embassy in London to have this report published in the Jewish and the general press, but without revealing the source, and also to give the report to the World Jewish Congress in London to distribute throughout the Jewish world. Efforts should be made to gain the support of world public opinion through the Jewish and general press, while taking care that the expression of anger should not turn into an anti-Communist tirade. (See telegrams 724, 19 April 1954; 739, 22 April 1954, both filed under 130.09/2319/4. See also No. 227.)

174. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 17 April 1954

Coded Tel. WIA315; Outg.: 93.01/2210/7

Summary

Several subjects were discussed at a meeting with Byroade:[1]

1. The debate at the Security Council.[2] Byroade inquired what Israel's reaction would be to a proposal linking condemnation of the Nahalin incident with an emphatic demand for negotiations, with Lebanon promising to abstain. Eban opposes this proposal, and pointed out that there have been 25 Israeli casualties as against those in Nahalin. Byroade admitted that this

compromise proposal is not really a compromise, especially in view of the fact that the proposal for negotiations would meet with a veto. He summed up with a promise to encourage Brazil [to hold a general debate] and to aim at a resolution whose main component would be a demand for negotiations on the borders Eban stressed the importance of not neglecting or obscuring Article XII.

2. Grant-in-Aid. Byroade said this would amount to $52m. He agreed to Eban's suggestion that the letter on this subject should not include a rejection of Israel's request for food surpluses.[3] He also said that they are considering continuing this program at the same level next year, but are hoping to reduce the amount gradually in the following years in order to encourage Congress to continue this aid for a long time.[4]

3. Regarding the jet planes,[5] he said Israel's request is reasonable, and promised a decision would be taken by the end of the month.

4. As to his speech in Dayton,[6] he admitted that he had expressed himself unfortunately and intimated that he is considering ways of clearing up the misunderstanding.

Notes

1. The conversation took place on 14 April. A full account in Ben-Horin's letter to the U.S. Division, 15 April 1954, in file 130.20/2460/3.
2. See No. 168.
3. At the beginning of April, Eban met with Stassen, the head of the Foreign Operations Administration, in order to discuss Israel's request to increase the allocation for the last quarter of the grant for the 1954 financial year, ending in June. The annual amount of the grant to Israel for that year had not been fixed in advance, but only the overall amount for Israel and the Arab states – $135 million. He based his request on the fact that a major part of the additional sum would serve for purchases within the framework of paragraph 550 of the Mutual Security Act, according to which a certain amount of the aid would be used to purchase surplus products and U.S. manufactured goods. In the letter of reply, which reached Eban after the conversation, the Administration announced that the allocation for the last quarter was $13,125,000, as in each of the previous quarters. In the letter there was no mention of surpluses. (See Levin to the U.S. Division, W261, 3 April 1954, 93.01/2210/7; Rand to Eban, 14 April 1954, 130.20/2486/3.) See also No. 191.
4. On 15 April, Eban sent a memorandum to the secretary of state containing a detailed request for economic and technical aid for Israel for the financial year July 1954-June 1955. The memorandum in file 130.20/2486/2.
5. Israel's request to purchase jet fighters of the F-68 type – see No. 106.
6. See No. 168 and note 2.

175. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to E. Elath (London). 19 April 1954

Coded Tel. 726; Outg.: 130.09/2310/6

Summary

In his telegram, also addressed to Eban, Sharett states that the picture described by Elath[1] is extremely ugly and that it demands immediate reaction. The comprehensive condemnation of all retaliatory actions implies the non-condemnation of aggression. The idea of a commission would include all four Arab states is completely unacceptable and implies encouraging the bloc hostile to Israel. The Powers' surrender in the matter of Article XII is humiliating, and its significance is approval of the harmful principle of selective implementation. If Israel had met with Jordan, and with Jordan alone, it would have proved the ineffectiveness of the Local Commanders' Agreement[2] and they would have tried jointly to find other ways of improving the situation. The Powers' adherence to the Local Commanders' Agreement as the sole panacea shows a superficial attitude and an inclination to fulfil their obligations by means of some sort of slogan. The fact that they finally adopted the recommendations of the Arab Legion without consulting Israel demonstrates their bias, and demands a vigorous protest by Israel. Sharett instructs his addressees to request an immediate meeting and to protest strongly on the above lines. They should stress the confidential nature of their statements in accordance with the confidential nature of the information received by Israel, but if the Powers make their views public so will Israel.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 172.
2. See No. 169 and notes 2 and 3.
3. Shiloah's meetings in the Department of State according to these instructions – see No. 182; Elath's meeting with Allen – see his telegram to Sharett, 606, 21 April 1954, 93.04/40/14.

176. Ch. Herzog (Washington) to the Intelligence Branch, I.D.F. 19 April 1954

Coded Tel. WIA316; Outg.: 93.01/2210/7

Summary

In a talk with A-Shafi'a [spelling uncertain], the Egyptian military attaché in Washington, the border situation was discussed. The attaché refused to accept a message from Israel,[1] but agreed to pass on the proposal for a meeting. He stressed that they want a peaceful border, but as a former commander of the Egyptian forces in Sinai he can testify that their strength is not such as would enable them to guard the border effectively; it is exactly this weakness which causes, here and there, an inclination to demonstrate aggressiveness. He stressed that his meeting with Herzog had been authorized by the Revolutionary Council.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 164.
2. On the evacuation of the British military base in the Suez Canal area.
3. A detailed report on the conversation, 22 April 1954, in file 130.20/2477/20.

177. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to A. Eban and R. Shiloah (Washington). 19 April 1954

Coded Tel. 336; Outg.: 130.09/2310/6

Summary

Rafael reports on a meeting to discuss Israel's reply to the proposal to meet the Egyptians, which had been transmitted through Russell. The following is Israel's reply: (1) The venue – Beer Sheba or Gaza. (2) Israel to be represented by Harkabi, Tekoah, Divon and Rafael. (3) The agenda – cessation of all hostilities and, in particular, infractions of security on the border.[1]

Russell was taken aback when he heard this, and said that he had not imagined that Shiloah's proposal was for such a comprehensive meeting. The American initiative was caused by their concern about a possible outbreak of violence along the border and they had not imagined such a comprehensive

agenda. His opinion is that the meeting will fail if Israel insists on discussing all the points mentioned. Rafael replied that this is possibly a case of crossed wires, because Israel had simultaneously approached the Egyptians directly and had assumed that Riad's reply also applied to their direct approach.[2]

Following a consultation, Rafael met Russell again and told him that, though Israel had aimed at a meeting with a competent Egyptian representative, it would not oppose Riad's proposal for a preliminary talk at which the situation on the border and a future meeting of competent representatives would be discussed. Russell was noticeably relieved when he heard this and promised to transmit this message to Cairo through the Department of State;[3] however, no reply has so far been received about the meeting which was supposed to be held on the 19th.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 171. In a discussion held in the Ministry of Defence, Sharett suggested that in the event of the Egyptians claiming that they had no control over infiltrations, it should be demanded that they lift the boycott and blockade and cease the propaganda – matters which were under their complete control.(See M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. II, pp. 465-466 [Hebrew]).
2. See No. 164.
3. Compare *FRUS 1952-54*, Vol. IX (part 1), No. 798.
4. On 21 April, Russell reported that the Egyptian reply had been held up on account of Riad's trip to Damascus. On 26 April, Russell conveyed Riad's reply that he was ready to come to the meeting, but demanded that a U.N. representative should participate in it; Israel replied on 27 April that it preferred a face-to-face meeting, but also agreed to a meeting with the participation of a U.N. representative. The Egyptian reaction was handed to Israel on 29 April, and the gist of it was that Egypt was not prepared to meet until after the discussions had been held in the emergency sessions of the Armistice Commission concerning the recent incidents, and only after that would the Egyptian representative on the Armistice Commission, Saleh Gohar, be authorized to meet at any time informally with the staff officer to the Armistice Commissions, Arie Shalev. (See memo of Rafael to Sharett, 4 May 1954, 130.15/3744/2.) On the meeting with Gohar see No. 200.

178. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 19 April 1954

Coded Tel. 338; Outg.: 130.09/2310/6

Summary

Rafael reports on a meeting with Russell held at the latter's request. Russell said that the last 48 hours had been devoted to high-level discussions of Israel's problems, and that he had been requested to submit an analysis and an elucidation of Israel's policy. He was now asking for help in composing his telegram; he remarked that the prevailing impression was that Israel aimed at forcing the Arab states to conclude peace and therefore it was not interested in reducing tension until its objective had been reached. Following a consultation with the foreign minister, Rafael authoritatively informed Russell of the government's position, as follows:

1. Israel's policy is in no way at all aimed at forcing a showdown.
2. Israel's overriding aim is to limit conflicts and reduce tension.
3. All of Israel's actions constitute political or other reaction to provocation.
4. Israel is sceptical about the proposed quack remedies, such as the Local Commanders' Agreement.
5 The Arab governments' claim that they cannot stop the incidents should be put to the test by their showing goodwill in stopping those elements under their control, such as the vicious incitement, the boycott, the blockade, and opposition to the resettlement of refugees.
6. Tensions will abate when the Arabs are prepared to forgo enmity, accept responsibility for maintaining security on the borders, and cooperate on a political level in planning means for improving the situation.
7. The Powers should make the Arabs aware of the dangers inherent in adhering to their hostile policies, should demand negotiations on a modus vivendi and full implementation of the Armistice Agreements, and should convince the Arabs that they will not abandon Israel and will not tolerate direct or indirect aggression against it.

Russell replied as follows:

1. The Government of the United States demands that Israel stop all retaliatory actions.

2. The Local Commanders' Agreement is effective and should be adhered to.

3. The Administration is resolved to implement the Johnston plan and is prepared to invest $120m in it.

4. He thinks that Israel would make a decisive contribution towards a peaceful settlement if it were prepared to start paying compensation to the refugees and to admit 40,000 to 70,000 Arab repatriates. In conclusion, Rafael referred to Russell's suggestion that the differences of opinion between Israel and the United States be resolved and proposed a meeting at which the representatives of the two countries would discuss them in depth, the aim being to reduce tension and achieve a modus vivendi between Israel and the Arab's on the basis of the existing situation. Russell agreed enthusiastically and said that he would take that opportunity to propose American guarantees for Israel's territorial integrity.[1]

Note

1. In the recommendations he sent to the Department of State, Russell suggested arranging a meeting between the representatives of Israel and Jordan; the agenda would be the improvement of the situation on the borders. The meeting would not be held according to Article XII because of Jordan's difficulties with this question, and would be in the presence of one or more Western representatives. Russell added that in order to convince the Jordanians to agree to the meeting, the Western powers were ready to warn Jordan that a refusal to meet would not only prejudice the lives of its citizens but might also have a bearing on its territorial integrity. (See J. Herzog to Israel embassy in Washington, telegram 348, 23 April 1954, 130.09/2310/6.)

179. Major-General V. Bennike (Jerusalem) to M. Sharett. 20 April 1954

Notes

1. Since the withdrawal of the Israeli representatives from the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission on 23 March 1954, Israel had adopted a system of presenting weekly reports of incidents directly to the Security Council.
2. Article IX of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement states that the legal quorum in the sessions of the Commission, comprising two representatives of each side and the chairman who is an officer from the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization staff, is the majority of its members. This meant that it was sufficient for only one side to be present in addition to the chairman, and that in the absence of unanimity, decisions would be adopted by a majority of votes of the Commission members present at the session.
3. Israel's reply – see No. 240.

180. M. Sharett [Jerusalem] to Major-General V. Bennike (Jerusalem). 20 April 1954

Notes

1. Sharett sent this letter after an internal consultation in the Ministry and after receiving further information with regard to the remarks of the Commission chairman Hutchison. Bennike's letter to him (No. 179) is what prompted Sharett to send this letter. (See correspondence, end of March-mid-April, in file 130.02/2431/10; M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. II, p. 473 [Hebrew].)
2. Rafael also instructed Eban to make a friendly approach to Bedell Smith, and based on Hutchison's remarks, to explain "that we cannot tolerate Hutchison's continuing to be in charge and because of our friendly relations with the United States we do not wish to declare him to be a persona non grata, and you must avoid a crisis by his immediate recall". (Telegram IWA354, 26 April 1954, 130.09/2310/6.) See also Nos. 186, 203.

181. Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 20 April 1954

Coded Tel. 195; Inc.: 130.09/2326/2

Summary

At Eliashiv's meeting with Zorin,[1] he requested Soviet support of Israel's demand for direct negotiations, quoting Vyshinsky's words at the previous meeting of the Security Council. No answer was forthcoming, as usual, but Zorin argued at length that their general position is in favour of direct negotiations, but that the time is not yet ripe for that because of the unclear situation. The Security Council is still taken up with a procedural debate, and perhaps a better proposal than having the parties meet will come up. Eliashiv replied that Israel also has a procedural demand, namely, that the Council discuss the situation in general and not each complaint separately.[2] Zorin said he would convey Eliashiv's comments to his minister.

Notes

1. Eliashiv visited Deputy Minister Zorin on the instruction of the Ministry to contact a high level official and to ask for a commitment for Soviet support for Israel's demand to convene the conference according to Article XII. The instruction was issued in light of Zaitzev's remarks in an earlier meeting (see No. 150) that they

viewed positively the convening of the conference, and in order to put the sincerity of the Soviet demand for direct negotiations to the test. Eliashiv himself saw no point in such a meeting. (See exchange of telegrams between the East European Division and Eliashiv, 7–15 April, 130.09/2326/1, 130.09/2326/2.) See also No. 189.

2. See No. 168. In the debate, held on 12 April, Vyshinsky announced his support for a separate debate to discuss the complaints of Israel and Jordan, according to the order in which they appeared on the agenda.

182. E. Ben-Horin (Washington) to the United States Division. 21 April 1954

Orig.: 130.20/2480/3

Summary

As instructed by the Ministry,[1] Shiloah and Ben-Horin met with Jernegan, since Byroade was absent.

Shiloah said he had heard contradictory rumours about the Powers' expectations of the outcome of the debate in the Security Council. One of the rumours was that they were intending to appoint a sub-committee of the Council charged with setting up a meeting between Israel and representatives of the Arab states. Israel is of the opinion that this initiative will end in failure, and the only way to achieve results is through direct negotiations between Israel and each of the Arab states separately. The presence of several Arab states at the conference table will lead to the formation of a front united around the most extreme common denominator. The proof is Bunche's success in Rhodes when he achieved the Armistice Agreements, as against the failure of the Lausanne Conference.

Jernegan did not explicitly confirm this rumour, but asked whether the Israelis did not think that the participation of Egypt and Lebanon would result in a more moderate stance. Shiloah repeated his arguments against negotiations with several Arab states at the same table, and stressed that Lebanon is not involved in the issues which have arisen lately between Israel and the other Arab states. He added that there would also be procedural difficulties, and there was no assurance that the Soviets would not veto the proposal to appoint a sub-committee.

Notes

1. See No. 175

2. See No. 174.
3. This proposal was raised during the debate in the Security Council on the Qibya operation – See Vol. 8, Nos. 507, 531.
4. Jacob Robinson, the legal counsellor of the permanent mission to the U.N., examined precedents from the beginning of the Security Council sessions, and found that proposals to establish sub-committees of the Council had been vetoed six times, and that each time such a committee was set up this was done without opposition on the part of a permanent member of the Council. (See memorandum of Robinson, 9 April 1954, 130.02/2405/4.)

183. A. Eban (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 22 April 1954

Coded Tel. XA746; Inc.: 93.01/2181/12

Summary

Eban discussed the Benot Yaaqov project with the U.N. secretary-general. The secretary said he had read the Dixon-Eysvoogel report[1] and are convinced that the project could be continued as long as the rights of all the parties preserved. If he obtains adequate support, he will be prepared to submit to the Security Council, as an initiative of the Secretariat, a plan based on this report and thus break the impasse. He has spoken with the representatives of the Powers, among them with Vyshinsky,[3] and received a favourable impression. He thinks such an initiative could result in the resumption of work within two or three months. The impediments are Syria's plan to raise the issue at the Security Council, and Johnston's forthcoming visit[4] – which could result in renewed arguments about the waters in a different context; he would therefore prefer the visit to be postponed. He also intimated that Israel would be required to give guarantees and firm assurances if it wanted the project to proceed. His agenda shows that the plan could be submitted to the Council at the end of June or the beginning of July.[5]

Notes

1. See No. 138 and note 1, No. 241 and note 1.
2. See No. 108 and note 3.
3. On the meetings of the secretary-general with Vyshinsky, as he reported in this conversation, see Kidron's report (telegram 747, 22 April 1954, 130.09/2331/10.)
4. See No. 108.
5. Sharett saw in this cable "the first ray of light over a gloomy vista," but warned that

the secretary-general of the U.N. must be regarded with caution because of his tendency to make statements formally in support of Israel but without implementing them. He believed that they must certainly cooperate as long as there was a chance of making progress, but noted that this depended largely on the rate of progress, during which the intention of the secretary-general would be tested, whether it really was to find a solution to the problem or merely to block Israel's initiative. The matter of the appeal to Syria troubled Sharett, and he wondered if the secretary-general in fact naively assumed that it would be possible to satisfy the Syrians with a promise of water rights, or whether he understood that the Syrians would not compromise with the diversion of the Jordan River, and his sole intention was to emerge cleanly in Israel's eyes. In the end, Sharett gave instructions to encourage the secretary-general to put out feelers in this matter with the U. S. Administration, but without trying to persuade the members of the Security Council, so that the proposal would appear to emanate from the secretary-general and not from Israel. (See Eban's telegram 130, 26 April 1954, 130.09/2330/23.) Additional notes and reactions – see No. 190.

184. Y. Tekoah [Jerusalem] to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 22 April 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2431/10

Summary

Tekoah reports on his meetings at the I.D.F. General Staff with Aluf-Mishne Givli and Sgan-Aluf Shalev, with the object of sounding out the army on the possible revival of the Local Commanders' Agreement with Jordan.[1] He explained that his Ministry has an interest in these talks being resumed, but the new procedure should distinguish between the meetings of the Armistice Commission and those of the local commanders; nor would this constitute a first step towards Israel's return to the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission forum. The Ministry's aim is to prevent the revival of the Local Commanders' Agreement from turning into a major issue between Israel and the United Nations – in which eventuality the U.N. could represent Israel's consent as a major step towards resolving the issue. The Ministry's practical proposal is to set up meetings between the commanders without participation of U.N. personnel.

The army representatives agree with the basic considerations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and consent to Israel to announcing the continued validity of the agreement, but they oppose the resumption in practice of meetings with Jordanian officers, saying that this should take place only after Israel has returned to the forum of the Armistice Commission. In their opinion, as long as Israel is exploiting its withdrawal

for political ends this position should not be modified even to such a limited extent as holding meetings within the framework of the Local Commanders' Agreement.

Following this meeting, the two parties drafted a joint document containing the principles agreed on.[2] It later transpired that the chief of staff's position is still more extreme: he thinks no undertaking should be given regarding the Local Commanders' Agreement until Israel has returned to the Armistice Commission – when the possible advantages of reviving the agreement should be re-examined.

Notes

1. See No. 169 and note 2.
2. In the appended document it was stated that the procedural regulations constituting the Local Commanders' Agreement have been in existence for three years, since March 1951, but have not managed to influence the situation on the border, and in fact during the period in which they were in force the most serious incidents took place. Those regulations which repeat the paragraphs of the Armistice Agreement, which confirmed the obligations devolving on Jordan, to take steps to prevent infiltrations and acts of aggression, and to punish the infiltrators, were not implemented. The second part of the regulations relate to technical matters arising after minor incidents, including the return of infiltrators or stolen property. To this end, regular meetings along the border were arranged between low-ranking officers, but the policy of the Jordanian representatives was to refuse to cooperate and to reach agreement even on unimportant matters. In the last paragraph, 5, of the document, it states that these regulations are in force, and before Israel considers the renewal of the contacts between the local commanders, Jordan must prevent infiltrations and acts of aggression and punish the infiltrators. (19 April 1954, 130.02/2431/10.)

185. Ch. Herzog (Washington) to the Israel Ambassador in Washington. 22 April 1954

Orig.: 93.08/361/8

Summary

Herzog raises questions regarding Israel's policy on military aid.[1] Israel's policy is in effect only opposition to the arming of Iraq and has no other substance. This line of action will at most delay for a time the supply of arms to Iraq, but will not be able to prevent the arming of the Arab states in the long run. He thinks it more important to supply the I.D.F. with modern

weapons. If Israel could reach an agreement with the Department of State, on a reasonable basis, for the supply of modern weaponry within the framework of military aid, to be paid for by increasing economic aid to an extent permitting such procurement – this would help Israel more than its objection to the arming of Iraq. As regards the Arabs, he assumes that they will get their arms eventually and Israel's opposition will be to no avail. However, the possibility also exists that their internal conflicts and their opposition to the conditions set by the Americans will in the end prevent them from obtaining arms. In any case, he recommends changing Israel's policy in this matter, but this should naturally be preceded by a discussion in depth with the I.D.F. General Staff on the impact of American military aid to the Arabs, on the balance of power in the region, and on what Israel would consider suitable compensation to such aid. [2]

Notes

1. See Nos. 7, 8.
2. See Nos. 188, 192.

186. Major-General V. Bennike (Jerusalem) to the Prime Minister. 22 April 1954

Notes

1. No. 180.
2. No. 179.
3. Sharett's reply – see No. 193.

187. D. Hacohen (Rangoon) to D. Lewin (Jerusalem). 23 April 1954

Orig.: 130.14/2554/2

Summary

Hacohen has met U Nu and briefed him on the situation in the relations between Israel and its neighbours and on Israel's desire for peace and good relations with its neighbours. He said that the Arabs are using blackmail and pretend that there is an Asiatic-Arab bloc against Israel. He then turned to

India's attitude, which is in utter contradiction to the accepted norms of ethics and decency, and compared it to Burma's positive attitude. He requested that Burma use the opportunity of the Colombo conference[1] to raise the issue with India.

U Nu listened attentively and said it is useless to raise this issue with Pakistan and Indonesia present – these countries would also participate in the Colombo conference – but he would do so in a face-to-face meeting with Nehru, of whom he would demand an unequivocal answer. He promised to brief Hacohen after the meeting.[2]

Notes

1. On 28 April–2 May 1954 the first conference of the prime ministers of Pakistan, India, Burma, Indonesia and Ceylon took place in Colombo, Ceylon. The conference ended with a declaration of support for the Geneva Conference, and a peace plan for Indochina; the prime ministers declared their determination to oppose all Communist and anti-Communist intervention in their countries, expressed support for the admission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations, condemned colonialism and demanded a ban on hydrogen bomb tests. They also expressed grave concern over the condition of the Arab refugees and support for the right of self-determination of Morocco and Tunisia.
2. A few days later Hacohen added that he did not expect even under the best of circumstances a radical change in Israel-India relations, however U Nu's reaction, and the agreement between them that emerged during the conversation with regard to the relations between Israel and the Arab States and the Asian countries, were very useful. (See Hacohen to the Asia Division, 26 April 1954, 130.14/2558/6.) See also No. 204.

188. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett (Jerusalem) and E. Elath (London). 25 April 1954

Coded Tel. WTEA62; Outg.: 93.01/2210/9

Summary

Eban sums up the campaign against the arming of the Arab states.[1] The President's bill for military aid for 1954/55 as submitted to Congress does not contain any reference to financing the supply of arms to the Middle East. This is an encouraging development, and is partly a result of our activity. At the same time, this does not prevent the Administration from arming these countries if it wishes to do so, because it has budget reserves and because it can transfer monies from the allocations for Greece and Turkey.

As to the arming of Iraq, Bedell Smith told Eban the previous day that there is no cause for concern in the near future. Eban points out that this does not mean that the campaign can be abandoned, because the main threat is not from Iraq but from the Anglo-Egyptian treaty. Israel has so far succeeded in preventing large-scale arming of the Arab states, not least because of internal problems in the Arab world. The activity in the United States should continue, but we should also be prepared to face a situation where the West decides that there is no alternative but to supply arms to both Israel and the Arab states, and Israel can do nothing to avert this development. Israel should decide what additional guarantees for its security it should demand and what contribution to the Western defence plans it can propose. He therefore entirely agrees with para. 8 of Elath's telegram of March 8,[2] and thinks that a committee should be set up to study this subject.[3]

Notes

1. See Nos. 99, 185.
2. Elath suggested that Israel should initiate a comprehensive discussion with the governments of Britain, the United States and France regarding the following questions: what promises, beyond the Three Power Declaration, would it receive for the preservation of its security when it would be surrounded by states who were members of an organization whose members also included its enemies; what could be the significance of its participation in the defence of the region without being a member of it, and if it decided positively in this respect, what would be the tangible assistance it would receive in military, economic and political terms. (See telegram to Lourie, No. 465, 8 March 1954, 93.04/41/7.)
3. The next day Eban explained that the present summary had been written two days before the Iraqi announcement about the supply of arms from the United States (See No. 192 and note 1). However, this announcement reinforces the conclusion that a policy of protest and opposition is not enough, although it should be persisted with, but the raising of constructive demands by Israel should be considered. (See telegram WTEA65, 26 April 1954, 93.01/2210/9.)

189. Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow) to the East European Division. 25 April 1954

Orig.: 130.11/2492/17

Summary

Eliashiv is surprised that he has been instructed to obtain an "undertaking" and an unequivocal answer on the Soviet position in the debate at the Security Council from the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[1] His experience during the last six years has taught him that the Soviets do not give such answers, except for a categorical negative. The talks at the Ministry are as a rule one-sided, and it is seldom that a Soviet official gives a reply or enters into a conversation. Their custom is to record every conversation meticulously, and one can assume that these records are studied before every meeting. The reiteration of the same subject is therefore rather out of place. The diplomatic routine in Moscow is different from that in other places and one has to get to know it and conduct oneself accordingly.

Note

1.
See No. 181 and n. 1.

190. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 26 April 1954

Orig.: 130.09/3688/9

Tekoah refers to Eban's telegram on Hammarskjöld's initiative to solve the Benot Yaaqov project crisis.[1] He thinks the secretary-general's proposal is a very important new development and the secretary should be encouraged in his initiative. At the same time, not all of the secretary's proposals are helpful, for instance, the proposal to involve the Bunche Committee in the issue, which might complicate it because the same committee deals also with the regional water problems; or the proposal to submit the issue again to the Security Council, which might involve the risk of a Soviet veto. In Tekoah's opinion, the best course of action should include the following points:

1. The conclusions of the Dixon-Eysvoogel committee as a solution to the technical problem of ensuring the supply of water to Syria.

2. The guarantees provided by Israel should also include, in addition to those concerning water and land, an undertaking to preserve the character of the Demilitarized Zone as an area free of military forces.

3. Hammarskjöld should be persuaded to instruct Bennike to accept these guarantees as meeting the issues which had brought him to demand cessation of work in the first place.

4. Negotiations with the Powers to ensure their support of the resumption of work and their agreement to refrain from another debate in the Security Council, unless Syria appeals against renewing the project.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 183.
2. See No. 108.
3. In the margins of the document, Sharett wrote on 27 April in his own handwriting: "1.The greater the suspicion of Hammarskjöld, the more praiseworthy it is. 2. The general trend of Tekoah's analysis appeals to me. The Security Council is a major stumbling block. 3. On the other hand, I don't see any chance of instructing Bennike to be satisfied with guarantees with regard to water rights. 4. We must consult about the problem in its entirety. Perhaps in the meantime it is worth cabling Eban to wait for additional instructions. M.S." Cf. also his telegram to Eban, in No. 183, n. 5.

191. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett and L. Eshkol. 26 April 1954

Coded Tel. 338; Outg.: 93.01/2210/10

Summary

In a consultation at the embassy on the Grant-in-Aid, the following conclusions were reached: Israel should request an additional allocation of food surpluses in the amount of $15m.[1] This demand should be made even if the chances are that it will be rejected, because there is always the possibility of unexploited surpluses, and also in order to express dissatisfaction with the present allocation of $54m. A group of friends in Congress should be recruited for the purpose of proposing that the allocation to Israel should stand by itself and not be a part of the regional allocation. The sponsors will be prepared to withdraw the amendment only if the allocation is raised to

$55m–$60m. Eban requests the Division's comments because he wants to start working on this idea immediately.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 174 and n. 3.
2. The line proposed by Eban gained the Ministry of Finance's approval – see Sharett to Eban, telegram 376, 29 April 1954, 130.09/2310/6. In his reply to Stassen (29 April), Eban reiterated the request for an increase in the allocation of the fourth quarter of the grant and the assertion that the main part of the allocation would be used to buy food surpluses in the United States. However on 27 May, Stassen finally turned down the request. (See in file 130.20/2486/3.)

192. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the United States Division. 27 April 1954

Coded Tel. WIA349; Outg.: 93.01/2210/7

Summary

Eban and Shiloah met with Byroade to discuss Iraq's announcement about the supply of American arms and the statement by the Americans which followed.[1] Byroade stressed that the Iraqi announcement that the arms would be supplied with no conditions attached is not accurate: the arms will be supplied without the stipulation that Iraq join a particular defence organization. But there are other conditions. He quoted from the agreement, which said expressly that "assistance will be provided subject to the provisions of applicable legislative authority and will be related in character, timing and amount to international developments in the area." The actual implementation of the agreement will commence after a military mission has visited Iraq, and its recommendations will be taken into account before the final decision by the president and the secretary of state, as will the degree of tension in the area and Israel's needs.

Eban replied that the United States could not have chosen worse timing for this step, just when the tension in the area and Arab hostility towards Israel are at their peak. The supply of arms will increase the danger of a conflagration and the feelings of insecurity in Israel.

Byroade replied that Israel's arguments have been and will be taken into account when the final decision on the supply of arms is taken, which is not expected in the near future. He repeated his old arguments that Israel is oblivious of what is happening in the world and of America's need to

demonstrate to the Arabs that it is doing something for them, and that most of the arms are being, and will be, supplied by Britain, and the Americans will only give Iraq some supplementary materiel. He admitted that Iraq had not given any undertaking to refrain from hostile acts against Israel, but stressed that if Israel is attacked by the Arab states America will come out, even by force of arms, against the aggressors, and if the balance of power is changed, Israel will be supplied with arms to restore it.[2]

Notes

1. On 25 April the Iraqi government announced that the United States had agreed unconditionally to extend it military aid, and without linking it with an Iraqi undertaking to enter into an alliance or any other political commitment. In reaction, on 26 April the Israel embassy in Washington made the letter that Eban had delivered to the Department of State opposing the intention to supply arms to Iraq available for publication – No. 123, n. 1.
2. In reply to this telegram, Sharett instructed Eban to increase the public opposition to the supply of arms to Iraq on the grounds of the absence of the following factors: 1. A commitment to non-belligerence on the part of Iraq; 2. A public commitment on the part of the United States to Israel's security; 3. The promise to give Israel arms in compensation. He explained that this line of reasoning could in due course lead to making positive demands, although at present it was imperative to urgently take the line of opposition to the arming of the Arabs. (See his telegram 380, 29 April 1954, 130.09/2310/6.)

   On 2 May Eban reported that Jewish delegations were flocking to the Department of State, and in particular to Byroade, and on preparations for Jewish public action among the Members of Congress of the two parties. He himself had talked with the chairman of the House of Representatives. (See his telegram WIA369, 2 May 1954, 93.01/2210/6.) See also No. 217.

193. M. Sharett [Jerusalem] to Major-General V. Bennike (Jerusalem). 27 April 1954

Note

1. See No. 186 and the notes there. Sharett replied to Bennike's letter only on 6 June – No. 240.

194. Note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the U.S.S.R. Legation in Tel Aviv. 29 April 1954

Translation from Russian:[1] 130.11/2496/7

Summary

Following verbal approaches by the U.S.S.R., the Ministry of Foreign Affairs proposes to raise the level of representation in the two countries to that of embassies.[2]

Notes

1. The original Russian text is on file.
2. Eliashiv replied that "One cannot underestimate the impact of this measure on the Jews of the Soviet Union", and that one could see in it an expression of the desire of the Soviet Union to give the appearance externally of an even-handed relationship with Israel and the Arabs. (Telegram 202, 28 April 1954, 130.09/2326/2.)

   On 13 May, the Soviet Union conveyed its agreement to raise the level of its legation and a public announcement to this effect was issued on 16 June. In the middle of August the two ministers in Moscow and Tel Aviv presented their credentials as ambassadors.

195. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 29 April 1954

Coded Tel. 379; Outg.: 130.09/2310/6

Summary

Sharett cites Gideon Rafael, in whose opinion it is useless to continue with the debate in the Security Council and who thinks that Israel had better remove its complaint from the agenda.[1] This step will demonstrate the Council's impotence which is caused by Arab extortion and the Soviet power of veto, and will require the Powers to deal with the issue themselves. Sharett replies that it would be undignified to remove the complaint from the agenda once it appeared that the debate is not proceeding to Israel's liking; withdrawal of the complaint from the Council after Israel has withdrawn from the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission would create the impression of a planned line of gradual withdrawal from the United Nations. Moreover, the Arabs will consider it an admission of defeat and will be all the more encouraged. He asks urgently for Eban's opinion.[2]

Notes

1. This telegram was sent after the Security Council session on 27 April, which discussed the complaints of Israel and Lebanon regarding the events on the Jordan border. They still had not reached agreement on the agenda. (See also No. 168, Note 1). The British proposed a revised text in which at Eban's suggestion they deleted the words: "Special attention to Nahalin," whereas the Lebanese representative Malik rejected the proposal, unless it referred to the Nahalin operation as the main complaint.
2. No direct reply to this telegram has been traced, but see No. 202 (Editorial Note).

196. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the United States Division. 30 April 1954

Coded Tel. WIA366; Outg.: 93.01/2210/7

Summary

The ambassador and Shiloah have dined with Johnston, who is about to leave for Cairo, accompanied by engineering experts, for talks with the Arabs' Water Committee. They will then continue to Israel, where they will arrive on 3 June. Johnston believes that Bennike will authorize the resumption of work on the Benot Yaaqov project,[1] and he requests that Israel postpone the resumption until after his visit. He said that they will study the Arabs' and Israel's comments on his plan before they leave for Egypt.[2] He repeated his proposal of a plan for extensive development projects which would improve the local atmpsphere, and said the president was in favour of this idea.

Eban and Shiloah replied that they have to have instructions from home regarding the postponement of the resumption of work on the Benot Yaaqov project. At the same time, they requested Johnston to urge Hammarskjöld to hasten the submission of a favourable resolution on the project. The wider the separation between this project and the Johnston Plan, the better the atmosphere will be for his visit. They warned Johnston about the sceptical attitude in Israel regarding the policy of the United States.

Instructions are requested from the Ministry on whether to inform Johnston that the work will not be resumed until after his visit.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 190.
2. After a further reminder from the United States embassy on 13 April, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs conveyed to the embassy on 3 May technical comments prepared by Israel Water Planning engineers. In the accompanying letter they explained that the comments did not at that stage reflect the attitude of the Israeli Government towards the substantial problems in the regional water plan, the "Main Scheme." Most of the comments referred to the outdated data on which the plan was based; to the main doctrine of the use of water in the Jordan Basin only and the use of the power of gravity of the water only as against the advantages of also using water from outside the basin of the Jordan, the development of hydro-electric power and use of pumping; to the unfair allocation of water to Israel; to the non-inclusion of the waters of the Litani in the regional plan, and to the disregard for the hydroelectric plant that Israel was planning in the vicinity of the Benot Yaaqov Bridge. (See memorandum of 3 May, 130.02/3688/11.)
3. In a conversation with Russell on 28 April, Eytan expressed Israel's regret over the supply of arms to Iraq and said that perhaps it would have to re-examine its conception of the regional water cooperation which was based on the balance of power that had existed and was now being eroded. (Telegram to Washington, IW383, 30 April 1954, 130.09/2310/6.)
4. At a consultation held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it was decided to authorize Eban to assure Johnson that Israel would not resume the work on the diversion channel until the end of his visit to the region. Doubts were expressed as to whether the resumption of the work after his visit had ended would in fact lead to a solution of the question of the water complex because of the fear that Bennike would once more order the work to be halted; Syria would again issue a complaint or would begin an armed operation and the matter would once more come before the Security Council. (See consultation in the M.F.A., 3 May 1954, 130.02/3694/5.) See No. 214, Sharett's briefing to Shiloah and Eban.

197. R. Shiloah (Washington) to M. Sharett.[1] 3 May 1954

Coded Tel. WIA374; Outg.: 93.01/2211/11

Summary

Shiloah refers to the exchange of telegrams dealing with the Lebanese political initiative.[2] He stresses that Israel's friends in the Congress, and Jewish leaders like Klutznick and Blaustein, argue that Israel has lost the initiative vis-à-vis the Congress and public opinion; it is essential that Israel make itself heard and regain its former position as the advocate of a peace settlement. The Lebanese initiative, in spite of its misrepresentations, will achieve its aim and further weaken Israel's position. After having consulted the ambassador, he therefore suggests the ambassador be authorized to

launch a counteroffensive, and also to announce that Israel is prepared to enter negotiations on compensation to the refugees, as a contribution to the solution of their problem. The Department of State and the congressmen dealing with Israel's requests for grants accuse Israel of evading discussion of compensation. The inclusion of this subject in the ambassador's statement will have a favourable impact on the campaign for the Grant-in-Aid. Shiloah requests that instructions be sent by cable.[3]

Notes

1. Also sent to the director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Gideon Rafael.
2. The subject of this exchange of telegrams was the report from an intelligence source according to which Lebanon's U.N. representative, Charles Malik, had been empowered by his government and subsequently also by the Syrian and Iraqi governments, to announce on a date he deemed appropriate, that the Arab states would not be averse to holding talks aimed at solving the problem of Palestine by peaceful means on the basis of the implementation of the U.N. resolutions and the "Protocol" signed by the parties at the Lausanne Conference. (See Vol. 4, Companion Volume, Editorial Note, pp. 20–21) the main points of which, according to the Arab version, were the agreement to the 1947 partition borders, the return of the refugees, payment of compensation and the internationalization of Jerusalem.

   Eban considered that there was a grave danger that the Arab initiative would have a big impact in the world, and in order to forestall such an eventuality he suggested issuing a declaration reiterating Israel's readiness to conduct negotiations with each of the Arab states in accordance with the U.N. Charter and its aims. At first he suggested that the declaration should be made by the minister of foreign affairs and be handed to the Arabs by the U.N. secretary-general, however in a more toned-down version, in telegram 370, he later suggested that he himself would make the statement at the start of his speech in the Security Council, but he would also emphasize the need to comply strictly with the Armistice Agreements, and after the debate he would ask the secretary-general to issue this declaration to all the Arab states as a renewed invitation to peace negotiations. (See Rafael's telegram, No. 389, 2 May 1954, 130.09/2310/6; Eban's telegrams, No. 356, 29 April 1954, 93.01/2211/11; No. 370, 2 May 1954, 93.01/2210/10.)
3. See No. 199.

198. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 3 May 1954

Coded Tel. 396; Outg.: 130.09/2310/6

Summary

Sharett instructs Eban to request an urgent meeting with Dulles to discuss Byroade's two speeches.[1] He is to ask whether these speeches are an authoritative definition of the policy of the United States towards Israel. He should refer in particular to Byroade's statement on immigration of Jews to Israel in his second speech, and state that the Government of Israel considers this unjustified interference in matters under the sovereign control of Israel. The right of every Jew to come to Israel is the very breath and soul of the State, and whoever proposes that Israel abandon this principle attacks our deepest national feelings. Seeing that Israel will never give up this principle, a public demand that it do so will only serve to encourage Arab intransigence and is counterproductive to the peace process.[2]

Notes

1. Regarding Byroade's first speech, see No. 168, n. 2. In another speech, delivered in Philadelphia on 1 May to the American Council for Judaism, Byroade attempted to clarify his previous statements. He said that in his remarks on the connection between Israel and the Jews of the Diaspora he had not intended to interfere in Jewish religious affairs, to disparage the feeling of brotherhood between Jew and Jew, or to speak in condemnation of the financial support given by the Jews of the United States to Israel, but that it was up to Israel to find a way to dispel Arab apprehensions about mass immigration, which in any case was quite unlikely to be realized, not from the United States from where the Jews were in no hurry to emigrate, and not from the Soviet Union, from where the Jews were not allowed to emigrate. With regard to the refugees, he said that the solution to the problem lay in development programs that would make it possible to settle them outside Israel's borders, but it was also up to Israel to play its part in this by absorbing a number of refugees in its territory. It was also up to Israel to realistically discuss compensating the refugees, particularly in view of the fact that it was receiving reparations from Germany.

   As for the United States, he said that it was not abandoning its basic policy of aspiring to establish peace in the Middle East, but he stressed that in the near future it would be necessary to desist from the barren pursuit of a formal peace agreement and to concentrate on practical matters. He declared that the United States would not support any state in the Middle East that sought to expand its borders through aggression, and also that its concern for the security of the region would not cause it to seek the friendship of other states at the expense of Israel's interests, and for the

sake of the friendship of the Arab countries it could not agree to demands to abandon its aspiration for the improvement of relations between them and Israel.

2. On the conversation with Dulles, see No. 208. Byroade's two speeches were the main topic of Sharett's political survey at the opening of the Knesset's summer session. (See, *Divrei Ha-Knesset,* Knesset Reports, third session of the Second Knesset, Vol. XVI, 414th meeting, 10 May 1954, pp. 1595-1599 [Hebrew].)

199. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 4 April 1954

Coded Tel. 432; Outg.: 130.09/2312/8

Summary

Rafael informs Eban that the minister has approved his suggestions,[1] with the following modifications: Israel is prepared to enter into negotiations with each of its neighbours on a final settlement of the outstanding issues, on the basis of obligations deriving from the U.N. Charter. Eban should submit this formulation to the U.N. secretary-general and ensure that it is circulated among all members of the United Nations, while stressing that this is not a new line but has been Israel's declared policy since the signing of the Armistice Agreements; the present step comes only to confirm this policy.

The press should be asked to comment that this can be seen as a renewed invitation by Israel to the Arab states to enter into peace negotiations.

As to Byroade's speeches, it should be made clear that Israel cannot now come out with a statement on compensation after what he had said in public.[2] If he had been genuinely concerned about the question, he would not have issued a public statement and would certainly not have connected the matter with reparations from Germany.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 197 and n. 2.
2. See No. 198, n. 1.
3. Later on Rafael instructed the embassy to add the following paragraph to the declaration: "The Government of Israel declares its readiness to accept mutual international guarantees to preserve the territorial integrity and the political independence of Israel and the neighbouring Arab states. (See telegram IW417, 9 May 1954, 130.09/2310/6.)

200. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 4 May 1954

Coded Tel. 402; Outg.: 130.09/2310/6

Summary

Tekoah reports meeting unofficially with Gohar, who told him that it is in Egypt's interest to maintain a peaceful border.[1] Instructions have already gone out not to shoot at the Israeli border patrols even if they encroach slightly on Egyptian territory. He apologized for the shooting on 2 May from the Egyptian position near Kisufim. He said that the Egyptian authorities will set up boundary markers on their side of the Gaza Strip.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 177 and notes there.
2. Later on Tekoah announced that according to a confidential source, Hutchison, the chairman of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission, had just returned from a mission in Cairo on behalf of General Bennike concerning the situation in the Gaza area, and reported that the Egyptian military authorities had given vague promises but had not made any tangible promise regarding steps that could lead to a calming of the tension. (Telegram of 5 May 1954, 130.09/2310/6.)

201. M. Kidron (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 4 May 1954

Coded Tel XA779; Outg.: 93.01/2182/1

Summary

At a meeting between Eban and Hammarskjöld, the latter said that his initiative for the resumption of the work at Benot Yaaqov was delayed because of Johnston's visit.[1] He did not think Johnston's plan was a good one, neither from the technical nor the political aspect. In his opinion the best way would be to implement partial local plans which would later be integrated into one comprehensive plan, the idea being to strive for a technical and political balance. The Syrians would be compensated for the permission to work at Benot Yaaqov by being given rights in the dam to be built in Adassiyya. According to his agenda, they would review the situation

when Johnston returned from Cairo at the end of May, and would then decide whether to implement the plan locally or through the Security Council.

Notes

1. See No. 183.
2. This apparently refers to the memorandum of P. Sevette, a member of the U.N. Economic Commission for Europe, entitled "Legal Aspects of the Jordan Valley Development". This memorandum was prepared at the request of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, and was published in October 1953. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs files only the front cover of this report exists. (File 130.02/3688/9.)

   At the meeting of the mission to the U.N. on 4 May, Kidron said that he had read the Sevette report and learnt that the building of a dam on the Yarmuk River in Adassiyya was a main feature in it. The building of the dam would require a certain amount of work in the Demilitarized Zone. (130.031962/9.)

202. Editorial Note

Security Council Discussion of the Situation along the Jordan-Israel Border

The Security Council resumed its discussion of the Lebanese (submitted on behalf of Jordan) and the Israeli complaints on 3 and 4 May (see Nos. 151, 153). Following a discussion, the Council adopted a procedural resolution submitted by Brazil and Colombia whereby the Council would hold a general discussion, in which reference might be made to any or all items on the agenda, and at that stage the Council would not commit itself to the character of its eventual resolution, that could be either joint or separate. The majority of the Council Members supported this resolution; only Lebanon and the U.S.S.R. voted against.

During the debate Eban drew the attention of the Council to Article 35 of the Charter which says that a State which is not a member of the United Nations may bring to the attention of the Security Council any dispute to which it is a party if it accepts in advance, for the purpose of the dispute, the obligations of pacific settlement provided in the Charter. (See *SCOR, 9th Year,* 669th–670th Meeting, 3-4 May 1954.)

203. Y. Tekoah [Jerusalem] to G. Rafael. 5 May 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2431/10

Summary

As requested by the minister at a consultation which took place on 2 May, Tekoah submits his suggestions on the problem of Israel's participation in the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission:[1]

Israel should exploit its non-participation as far as possible – as a tactical weapon aimed at changing for the better the practical aspects of the Armistice Agreement. At the same time, Israel should start preparing the ground for its return to the Commission at a suitable moment and under suitable conditions. He therefore proposes that Hutchison's dismissal from the chairmanship of the Commission be adopted as Israel's central political aim in this context.[2] This demand should be submitted to the U.N. secretary-general and also to Bedell Smith of the American Delegation. In conversations with the secretary-general and with foreign representatives, Israel's position should be made clear as expecting Jordan, which had caused the deterioration in the situation, to commit itself to implementing the Armistice Agreement so that Israel could take the step of returning to the Commission. In any case, Israel should make it clear that it will not return to the Commission until Jordan has agreed to participate in the talks under Article XII. In addition, the practical aspects of the talks with Jordan, whether under Article XII or in another framework, should be studied in order to examine the possibilities of improving the Commission's procedures. In particular, the possibility should be considered of replacing the present system of mechanical voting, which has been proved to be ineffective, by bilateral arrangements.

As to Bennike's letter of 20 April, Tekoah suggests that Israel's reply be short and state that no signs have appeared so far of a change of attitude on the part of Jordan or of an improvement in the procedure of the Commission, which would justify Israel's return to that forum.[4]

Notes

1. The consultation on 2 May was between Sharett and Lavon concerning the reply to Bennike's letter about the return of Israel to the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission. Bennike's letter, see No. 179.
2. See No. 180.
3. Tekoah suggested not replying at all to Bennike's letter since, apart from requesting that Israel return to the Commission, there was no reference to the problems

connected with the Commission's work methods. (The memorandum in file 130.02/2431/10.)

4. Rafael agreed to Clause A and to the second proposal in Clause B, although he was sceptical about the usefulness of these proposals. He suggested calling for the removal of Hutchison as head of the Commission, and for Jordan to change its attitude to the Commission's activities, namely to indicate willingness to settle matters by cooperation with Israel. As for Bennike's letter, he suggested replying that Israel not found any signs of change in the situation in the Commission, either from the standpoint of Jordan's willingness to change its attitude and to cooperate unreservedly with Israel, or from the standpoint of a change of attitude of the U.N. body that was dealing with the problems that had arisen or were likely to arise in the Commission. (See Rafael to the minister of foreign affairs, 7 May 1954, 130.02/2431/10.) The letter of reply to Bennike that was finally sent, see No. 240.

204. D. Hacohen (Rangoon) to D. Lewin (Jerusalem). 7 May 1954

Orig.: 130.14/2558/6

Summary

Hacohen reports on a meeting with the director-general of the Burmese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ton Shien [spelling uncertain], who gave him a message from U Nu. The latter had met Nehru privately at the Colombo Conference in Ceylon and had spoken with him about the absence of relations between India and Israel. Nehru had replied that he did not oppose the opening of an Israeli legation in New Delhi and that he was prepared to discuss this subject. The director-general then said that U Nu requests Hacohen to go immediately to New Delhi to finalize the matter. Hacohen requested that this be put in writing, but was informed that this would be against accepted procedure and would require special permission. Hacohen asks for instructions.

Ton Shien also briefed Hacohen on the debate at the conference on the refugee problem: Pakistan proposed a strongly worded resolution, which met with determined opposition on the part of Burma and also of India. A more moderate version was finally adopted. [For the original and final versions, see Main Volume, pp. 307-8.] Hacohen also protested against this version, expressing his regret that Israel's point of view had not been adequately presented, and he wished to clarify it at a meeting with U Nu. Hacohen suggests that it would perhaps be preferable for the prime minister himself do so in a personal letter to U Nu.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 187 and notes.
2. Sharett replied to David Hacohen that he felt sure that in view of the nature of Israel's relations with the Arab states on the one hand, and with the Asian states on the other, and their relations with each other, Israel had emerged from the Colombo Conference more or less intact. Nevertheless, it was clear to him that they must learn a lesson from the conference and conduct an information campaign concerning the Arab refugees, which would be directed primarily at U Nu. As for the relations with India, Nehru's reply to U Nu was not entirely satisfactory. The proposal to establish an Israeli legation in New Delhi, which was a unilateral step, had been made to Eytan two years previously, but Israel needed a joint decision of the two states for the establishment of diplomatic relations between them, and then it would not matter if it were the first to establish its legation and the other side would establish its representation when the occasion presented itself. Nevertheless, at the same time he accepted the suggestion voiced at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to send a personal letter to Nehru in order to seek clarification of the statements made in Colombo. (See his letter to David Hacohen, 18 May 1954, CZA A245/60.) See also No. 218.

   Hacohen again met with U Nu and received from him additional explanations concerning the sequence of events that had led to the passing of the resolution on the refugees at the Colombo Conference. Among other things he said: "I would ask you to write to Mr. Sharett to ignore the resolution altogether, we do not intend to act according to it, and it would be best for you to forget about it." Later on in the conversation U Nu expressed his desire to visit Israel. (See D. Hacohen to D. Lewin, 3 June 1954, 130.02/2383/12.)

205. M. Kidron (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 12 May 1954

Note

1. On 11 May the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission passed a resolution (in Israel's absence) condemning Israel in the strongest possible terms for the incident that took place on 9 May in Khirbet Illin. According to the resolution, an Israeli unit had crossed the Armistice line, encountered a Jordanian force, and in the exchange of fire two Israelis had been killed and their bodies left in Jordanian territory. The Israeli version was contained in a letter to the Security Council, in accordance with the practice that had been adopted by Israel since its withdrawal from the Mixed Armistice Commission, and according to which an Israeli patrol had been shot at in Israeli territory, and two wounded Israelis who were left in the area, had been dragged to Jordanian territory and killed there. (See Eban to the president of the Security Council, 12 May 1954, 130.02/2431/10, U.N. document S/3213.) Jordan returned the bodies of those killed on 10 May.

206. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett. 12 May 1954

Coded Tel 793; Inc.: 130.09/2331/11

Summary

Eban had talked with the representatives of the three Western Powers on the Security Council before the Council meeting. The subject was Jordan's refusal to undertake the commitment under Article 35 of the U.N. Charter.[1] Eban strongly criticized Jordan's position, and said that it never had cooperated with the U.N. in the past. He pointed out that this Article had been designed precisely to prevent all sorts of quasi governments and rebel movements from appearing before the Council without having undertaken this commitment in advance. Dixon, the British representative, proposed a compromise, by which the president of the Council would issue a declaration to the effect that the conditions of the Charter are also binding on Jordan, because it has previously appeared before the Council and has also applied for membership in the U.N. – implying acceptance of the principles of the Charter. The French and American representatives were not particularly enthusiastic about this proposal. After a meeting of the Powers' representatives with Malik, the Lebanese representative, it became clear that the Arabs rejected any sort of compromise. When the Security Council convened, the president read out a memorandum to the effect that all those who had previously applied to the Security Council without being members of the United Nations, had by implication undertaken to honour the Charter's principles. The Council then adjourned for consultations without any resolution having been adopted.[4] Eban points out that this affair demonstrates how implacable the Arabs are in their hatred of Israel.

Notes

1. See No. 202 (Editorial Note).
2. The reference is to a questionnaire presented to the Arab states and to the belligerents in Palestine by the Security Council in May 1948, in order to clarify the situation in Palestine and to help to obtain a cease-fire. Jordan did not reply to the questionnaire. (See Vol. I, No. 18.)
3. At the beginning of 1950, Garreau was dealing with a compromise proposal for solving the question of Jerusalem – see Vol. 5, Companion Volume, Editorial Note on pages 4–5.
4. See No. 229.

207. Ch. Yahil (Cologne) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 12 May 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2413/2

Summary

Yahil submits a review of relations between the Germans and the Jews.[1] His approach when writing the review was more sociological-ethical than political. His aim is to show that more efforts should be made to educate public opinion in Israel on this subject, which would be possible only if attitudes prevalent in German society were described. He wishes this review to be circulated in the Ministry and also to people like Ben-Gurion and Goldmann, and also – if possible – to be published as an newspaper article, fully or in part. In this letter he wishes to discuss some political and economic aspects on which he has not touched in his review.

The Reparations Agreement is being implemented to Israel's satisfaction. However, these economic relations are transient in nature and will be discontinued some time in the future. Israel has not done enough to develop economic relations not bound up with Reparations. There are signs that interest in Israel from the political aspect is gradually flagging. Secondary reasons for this phenomenon are a general lassitude in Germany's foreign policy, the unfriendly attitude of the Republican Administration in the United States, and Arab activity. But the main reason is that the Reparations Agreement have given the Germans the advantages they have expected and they are not willing to defray the second instalment.

In Yahil's opinion, Israel will be making a grave mistake if it defers the question of regular relations for long. Germany's importance is steadily growing and it can be of help to Israel both politically and economically. He has already stated this opinion in his memorandum of March 1953 to the Ministry[2] and the arguments he had offered then are equally valid today. The longer Israel puts off the issue the higher will be the price and the smaller the gain. In Germany itself, Hallstein is pressing for an arrangement but Adenauer is holding him back. Yahil himself feels that he has done everything that he can.

There is also an internal problem in Israel, and the proximity of the elections is not exactly helpful. Nevertheless, giving up the initiative would be burying one's head in the sand. Public opinion should be prepared for developments and the groundwork for that should be laid now. Perhaps cultural relations should come first, in particular with those circles where no problems exist. Mutual exchanges of scholars, labour leaders and students,

exhibitions, and the import of books should be undertaken. To do all this will need courage, but if Israel takes no risks it will get nowhere.

Yahil requests that the problem be brought before the minister and requests an answer.

Notes

1. The survey in File 130.02/2413/2.
2. See vol. 8, No. 141.

208. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 13 May 1954

Coded Tel. WIA403; Outg.: 93.01/2210/10

Summary

Eban has met with the secretary of state; Shiloah and Hart were also present. He said that of late Israel has been deeply concerned by two official statements and the publication of the agreement with Iraq.[1] As to the statements made by Byroade, in addition to discourteous remarks and impractical advice they also called into question spiritual tenets and principles of conscience regarding the ties between Israel and the Diaspora, and included acceptance of the situation of no peace between Israel and the Arab states. Byroade's most serious utterance was that encroaching on immigration of Jews to Israel – which is fundamental to Israel's national struggle for existence. Eban concluded by saying that the people of Israel feel that there has been a spiritual, historical and political turnabout in America's attitude, and he asked what the secretary intends to do in order to change that feeling.

Dulles began by saying that the situation as described by Eban is indeed worrying. Israel will be making a serious mistake if it adopts the pessimistic belief that America wishes to abandon the historical friendship between the two countries, to be disloyal to Israel or to put it in jeopardy. He agrees that the aim of achieving peace between Israel and the Arabs should not be abandoned, and indeed America has been devoting much thought lately to the problem of achieving contact between the parties. Several proposals have been put forward, among them the adoption of the format of the Trieste talks.[4] He requested Eban to transmit to his government his explicit assurance that he is very far from wishing to harm to Israel's security or stability.

The issue of Iraq was then discussed. Dulles said that the agreement with Iraq was not aimed against Israel – it might even prove to be helpful to it. He did not elaborate on this remark.

Eban had the impression that throughout the meeting that Dulles was uncomfortable and avoided going into details. Following the meeting, Eban agreed with Hart on the wording of Israel's press communiqué.[5]

Notes

1. See Nos. 192, 198
2. This apparently refers to the conversation that took place on 27 February 1953 – see Vol. 8, No. 105.
3. The reference is to remarks made by Dulles at a news conference on 11 May, from which it could be inferred that the United States had reconciled itself to the loss of French Indo-China.
4. Under the terms of the peace agreement with Italy in 1947, Trieste and the Istrian Peninsula were supposed to be a free and neutral territory under the U.N.'s protection, but in effect the territory was divided in two, one part being administered by an Anglo-American military government and the other by a Yugoslav military government. During 1954 simultaneous and separate negotiations were held in London between an Anglo-American commission and Italy and Yugoslavia. The negotiating procedure was agreed upon in advance. It was stressed that the aim was for an agreed and not an enforced settlement, and that the negotiations had to be held under conditions of strict secrecy. It was also agreed that the Security Council would not deal with the matter, and would only welcome the final agreement in a procedural resolution or by the president's declaration. In the agreement signed on 5 October 1954, the territory was divided between Italy and Yugoslavia, with Italy making minor concessions, and arrangements were made for population exchanges between the two parts.
5. Sharett expressed reservations over Eban's announcement to the press, saying that it was liable to foster illusions with regard to the nature of the relations with the United States, and it would have been better to say that there had been an important deliberation and nothing more.(See telegram 433, 14 May 1954, 130.09/2310/6.)
6. See No. 209.

209. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 14 May 1954

Coded Tel. WIA408; Outg.: 93.01/2210/10

Summary

Blaustein has seen the president and the secretary of state and referred to Byroade's speeches and to the military agreement with Iraq.[1] Blaustein says

that the president was impressed by his arguments and claimed that America's friendship with Israel is as firm as ever and that Iraq will not be supplied with arms until America is convinced that no harm will come to Israel from them.

Dulles agreed that the impression made by Byroade's speeches should be corrected. As to arms for Iraq, he claimed that America's plan is to undermine the Arab League. Iraq has not yet joined the Turkish-Pakistani treaty, but the intention is that after the visit of the military missions, it will be obliged to do so; the Arab League will be weakened as a result. The secretary intimated that it will be a long time before the agreement with Iraq is implemented. He emphasized that America has not abandoned its efforts to achieve peace in the region and that it is now studying a new plan designed to have the parties meet. The secretary stressed the confidential nature of this information and Blaustein has so far refused to go into any details.[2]

Silver has also been invited to meet Dulles,[3] following a previous meeting with Adams at which Silver protested the Administration's policy. At the meeting with Dulles, the latter repeated what he had said to Blaustein and stated that a suitable opportunity should be sought for a statement favourable to Israel. Silver has been asked to prepare a draft of such a statement.[4] Both Blaustein and Silver are convinced that Dulles is looking for a way to rectify the mistakes that have been made and they expect the embassy to encourage this attitude.[5]

Notes

1. See No. 192 and No. 198.
2. According to the American transcripts of the conversation, Dulles mentioned the "Trieste Formula", namely separate and secret negotiations with each of the parties. (*FRUS 1952-54*, Vol. IX (part 1), No. 822.) On the "Trieste Formula" see No. 208 and n. 4.
3. According to Eban's report on that conversation, Adams swore to Silver that Byroade had not received the approval of the secretary of state for his speech, and the White House would issue a reprimand to Byroade for having digressed from the sphere of Middle Eastern problems. (See Eban to Sharett, WIA322, 20 April 1954, 93.01/2210/7.) The two of them agreed that Silver would write to Dulles concerning the climate of relations between the Administration and Israel, and would suggest that a positive declaration should be made by the Attorney General Brownell, in the name of President Eisenhower, at the Israel Independence Day celebrations in Washington. See No. 211 and note 2.
4. On 19 May Eban announced that they were acting through Silver to get the Administration to make a positive statement through an official spokesman at the annual conference of the Zionist Organization of America on 24 June. After negotiations had already taken place regarding the text of the statement, which was

due to be made by Murphy, the deputy under-secretary of state, Dulles, announced to Silver that Murphy would not be appearing at the conference since as the time was not yet ripe for a fresh formulation of American policy. However, in the end, Murphy did make a warm and affable speech. The impression of the embassy staff was that it did not contain any new thinking or breakthrough from the standpoint of American policy. (See the telegrams of Eban to the United States Division, WIA431, 19 May 1954, 93.01/2210/10; WIA537, 13 June 1954, 93.01/2210/12; telegram from Shimoni and Herlitz to the United States Division, WIA591, 24 June 1954, ibid.)

5. In reply to this telegram Sharett instructed the embassy to refute, in future conversations, the claim of the secretary of state that Iraq's joining the Turkey-Pakistan alliance would contribute to the disintegration of the Arab League. He maintained that the Arab League was not a disciplined and solid organization whose principles included opposition to receiving military aid, but it was a loose organization whose central axis was hostility towards Israel, and therefore Iraq joining the alliance and receiving arms, in spite of its hostility towards Israel, would encourage this hostility and strengthen the League. (See his telegram to the Israel embassy in Washington, No. 440, 17 May 1954, 130.09/2310/6.)

210. R. Shiloah (Washington) to G. Rafael. 14 May 1954

Coded Tel. WIA410; Outg.: 93.01/2211/11

Summary

Byroade recommended that Blaustein meet the Egyptian ambassador in Washington. Blaustein was briefed at the embassy prior to the meeting, and was told, inter alia, to emphasize the need for direct contacts between Egyptian and Israeli authorized representatives.

At the meeting Blaustein told the Egyptian ambassador that Egypt would gain great sympathy in the Western world and in the United States in particular, if it reached a settlement with Israel. The ambassador explained that Egypt's position is determined mainly by its solidarity with the other Arab states. As many others in the Egyptian establishment, he personally knows that there is no use talking about repatriation of the refugees nor are there any grounds for fearing Israeli expansion. However, the time is not ripe for making declarations about a possible settlement. In his opinion, meetings between official representatives of the two states should be delayed until relations have been improved by means of unofficial contacts between people like Blaustein and his Egyptian counterparts. He mentioned as a possibility former Egyptian premier Hillali, who is due in Washington soon. He invited Blaustein to visit Egypt to receive a first-hand impression of the atmosphere there, and promised to contact him in a few weeks' time.

211. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 14 May 1954

Coded Tel. WIA409/2210/10

Summary

Eban refers to Sharett's comments on the press communiqué issued following his talk with Dulles.[1] He has quoted Dulles verbatim. If it turns out that he is mistaken then it is Dulles who has misled him and this can be added to his other offences. If any importance is to be attached to hostile utterances such as Byroade's speeches, then due weight must also be given to expressions of friendship. If words are unimportant, then why the fuss about what Byroade said? A choice has to be made between two possibilities: either there exists a mutual wish for good relations, but problems occasionally arise because of conflicts of interest – or, the bridges between the two countries have been burnt and there is nothing left but enmity and conflict, and anybody who thinks otherwise is deluding himself. In his opinion, every effort should be made to exorcise the feelings of deterioration in relations, and his latest talks with Eisenhower and Dulles and those of Jewish leaders [with them] are steps in the right direction. Israel will not demand a public reprimand of Byroade, but the poison can be diluted with more favourable utterances. As to the arming of Iraq – he will consult with Herzog on the situation and on the possibilities, and will cable his recommendations.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 208 and n. 5.
2. This refers to the congratulatory message which President Eisenhower sent to the festive dinner held by the Israel-United States Friendship League on the occasion of Israel's Independence Day in Washington on 11 May, and to remarks made at that same dinner by Attorney-General Brownell. (See No. 209 and n. 3.) Brownell's remarks were not of a political nature but were warm and friendly in tone. Among other things he said that peace in the Middle East represented an important goal of American foreign policy.
3. Eban's recommendations concerning Iraq, see No. 217 and notes.

   Sharett responded that even after these words his opinion remained unchanged. A distinction had to be drawn between statements made as a policy outline, and formulated in detail and with a thorough foundation, and casual expressions of sympathy. Byroade had dealt Israel a hard blow in his attack on immigration, the denial of its affinity with the Diaspora, the causal connection linking the Arab fear of its expansion as a reason for the absence of peace, and his hinting at the necessity for concessions on its part. These remarks were a link in a chain of unfriendly statements beginning with Dulles's June 1953 speech, and it transpired that he

(Byroade) faithfully reflected a tendency of the Department of State which would not necessarily in every stage and matter culminate in a political measure, but which was fraught with danger. Consequently, one shouldn't be in a hurry to express satisfaction with Dulles' remarks, but rather display a sober restraint. (See telegram 439, 16 May 1954, 130.09/2310/6.)

212. D. Lewin [Jerusalem] to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 14 May 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2414/3

Summary

Lewin refers to contacts between Israel and Communist China. Israel has agreed to the Chinese government's proposal to send a commercial mission to Peking for negotiations.[1] The affirmative reply was dispatched at the end of February but no answer from the Chinese has been forthcoming. On the other hand, Israel has not replied in any form to the Chinese government's intimations of November 1953 that it was prepared to exchange diplomatic representatives.[2] One may assume that the silence regarding the first subject is connected with the lack of response to the second one. In the meantime there are increasing indications that the Arabs are laying the groundwork for transferring their recognition from Nationalist to Communist China. Egypt signed an extensive commercial agreement with Communist China in March, and the Egyptian press is already arguing whether this constitutes de facto or de jure recognition. There are also signs that other countries, mainly Asiatic but also Western, are taking steps to cement their ties with Peking. There are commercial relations between China and many European countries, and business circles in China are pressing for closer relations. On the other hand, American opposition should be taken into account.

Lewin therefore suggests that steps be taken to anticipate the Arabs in establishing diplomatic relations with China. This would entail replying in the affirmative to China's November proposal and requesting them to reply in the matter of the commercial mission – expressing meanwhile the hope that the dispatch of the mission would promote the speedy exchange of diplomatic representatives. Both these approaches should preferably be made through the minister in Budapest who has good personal relations with the Chinese ambassador there.[6]

Notes

1. See No. 65 and n. 5.
2. See No. 48 and n. 1.
3. See ibid., n. 2.
4. This act forbade the sale of strategic materials to Eastern Bloc countries – see No. 71 and n. 2.
5. See No. 187, n. 1.
6. See No. 231.

213. Note for the Record by the Minister of Defence. 17 May 1954

Copy: 130.15/3749/4

Summary

Lavon, the Minister of Defence, sums up Trudeau's visit to Israel.[1] Trudeau attaches little strategic importance to Israel in the event of a global conflict. He thinks that even if the I.D.F. were equipped as required, it would not be able to fight in Iraq or in Syria owing to the opposition of the population there and would at most be able to defend the Suez Canal in the event of a breach in the West's first defence line. He also said he is not at all certain in which camp Israel would find itself on the day of reckoning.

His interlocutors attempted to explain to him the dangers Israel is facing as a result of the arming of the Arab states. He admitted that these fears are reasonable, but he thinks the solution lies in stationing U.N. forces in Israel. Lavon points out that Trudeau's statements, and in particular his incidental remarks and comments, refute the claim that the Pentagon is more favourably inclined towards Israel than the Department of State is.[3]

Notes

1. General Trudeau, the Assistant Chief of Staff of the United States Army in matters of intelligence, visited Israel on 14 May in the framework of his tour of 23 states from North Africa to India.
2. See No. 198, n. 1.
3. See also Lourie's report on the visit (in File 130.02/2449/3.) One of White's comments during the conversations was that the decision to supply arms to Iraq was not only that of the politicians in Washington, but also of the National Defense Council, representing the highest level of policy making.

214. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to R. Shiloah (Washington). 19 May 1954

Coded Tel. 458; Outg.: 130.09/2310/6

Summary

Sharett instructs Shiloah to tell Johnston that, in view of his forthcoming visit, Israel will defer resuming work on the diversion project until the middle of July. However, it should be made clear that Israel does not intend to let the whole summer go by in inactivity.[1]

For Shiloah's information, Israel is about to reject in writing the request for the admission of the survey team, for the reason that all the relevant data have already been given and additional data would be supplied by Israel if necessary.[2] Israel will add verbally that it refuses to commence a technical discussion on the Adassiyya dam before this project has been discussed and agreed on in principle. A comment will also be added that the arming of Iraq and Byroade's speeches[3] have created an unfavourable atmosphere in Israel regarding the regional plan, and the appearance of American technicians on the spot would not be opportune.[4] As for the talks with Johnston, Israel will not raise the subject of Adassiyya versus the resumption of the work at Benot Yaaqov, and will await Johnston's initiative in this matter.[5]

Notes

1. See No. 196 and n. 4. This directive was sent after an additional discussion in the Ministerial Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee on 18 May, with the participation also of the ministers of finance and agriculture, and water experts. At that consultation Sharett said that the publication of the Dixon-Eysvoogel report (see Nos. 138, 183), and the intention of the Arabs to construct a dam on the Yarmuk at Adassiyya, which would also require work in the Demilitarized Zone, improved the chances of resuming the work in the Benot Yaaqov Bridge area. (See M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. II, pp. 495–496 [Hebrew].)
2. On 7 May the United States embassy submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a written request to allow a survey group of five representatives of an American engineering company to enter Israeli territory from the south of Lake Tiberias in order (a) to carry out topographical measurements at the lake and in the Yarmuk triangle basin in order to compare the level of the water in Lake Tiberias with that in the Jordan water conduits, and (b) to examine with the representatives of the Israeli government the use made of the Yarmuk waters in order to establish a basis for the Adassiyya diversion dam project. (Telegram 130.02/2475/3.)
3. See No. 198 and n. 1.
4. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave a negative reply to this request in a letter of 19 May, stating that Israel had already supplied data to the Department of State and to

Johnston, and it was prepared to supply additional data as would be required. As for the diversionary project at Adassiyya, in the absence of fuller information on the project it was preferable to await the arrival of Johnston, at which time it would be discussed in detail. At the time of the delivery of the letter, Herzog made additional remarks verbally, corresponding to the document before us. White of the American embassy expressed regret at the refusal, and particularly over its being linked with public sentiment regarding the matter of arming Iraq. He added, as personal advice, that it would be as well for Israel to understand that the Congress was likely to link part of its future aid to states in the region with the implementation of the regional water program. (See M.F.A. to the United States embassy in Israel, 19 May 1954, 93.08/361/16; telegram 465 from the United States Division to the Israel embassy in Washington, 20 May 1954, 130.09/2310/6.) On 15 July, following the conversations with Johnston (See Nos. 264, 268) the American chargé d'affaires Russell repeated the request, and on 21 July the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a further refusal. (See in File 130.02/3688/12.)

215. Sh. Peres [Jerusalem] to N. Shamir (New York). 20 May 1954

Coded Tel. TNW441; Outg.: 130.09/2339/1

Summary

Peres briefs Nahum Shamir on the negotiations with the French on the acquisition of "Mystère" fighters.[1] The agreement has already been concluded and we would not wish to cancel it before there is definite confirmation by the United States [on the purchase of the F-86 planes]. On the other hand, we would not wish to commit ourselves to the Americans when such a large sum of money is involved and then be under an obligation, at least morally, to both countries. We are therefore requesting a definite "yes or no" answer from the Americans and we shall be able to take a decision only after we have clear answers from both countries.[2]

Notes

1. This telegram replies to the announcement by Nahum Shamir, the head of the Ministry of Defence mission in the United States, that the North American Company had made a detailed proposal for the supply of 24 F-86 planes (See No. 106 and n. 3.) of Canadian manufacture, the first four of them already in June, the proposal being in effect until 31 May, and therefore they had to begin negotiations immediately. (Telegrams 72, 11 May 1954; 76, 13 May 1854, 93.01/2182/2.)
2. See No. 233 and notes there, No. 260.

216. D. Hacohen (Rangoon) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 20 May 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2394/23

Summary

Hacohen reports that a high-level Burmese military study mission numbering ten officers will be leaving for Israel in three weeks' time, with the object of studying the I.D.F. It will stay in Israel for six weeks. Hacohen requests that this mission be accorded every facility; he stresses this because he has the impression that the I.D.F. is somehow unhappy about this visit.

Since coming to Burma he has formed the opinion that Israel has nothing to offer this country either politically or economically, and its only contribution could be in the military sphere. On his arrival he met Ne Win, the supreme commander of the army, and proposed to strengthen these ties and to exchange military missions. One military mission has already visited Israel[1] and the results were very promising. Now the second mission is to come, and he is convinced that this visit will be a further step in cementing and extending relations with Burma. The Burmese are about to reorganize their army radically and the mission wishes to study all the complex principles of military organization. Ne Win himself is considering dispatching to Israel a permanent military attaché on his own behalf, without any connection with his Foreign Ministry. He would also like to visit Israel himself. Hacohen hopes that the minister of defence will understand the great importance of this visit which could make for much closer relations between the two countries.[3]

Notes

1. See Vol. 8, No. 604.
2. From 20 January to 4 February 1954, a delegation headed by the director of the procurement department of the Burmese Ministry of Defence visited Israel to investigate the possibilities of arms purchase in Israel. Following the visit, the Burmese decided to purchase Spitfire and Dakota aircraft from Israel, and on 21 April a delegation arrived in Israel headed by Thakin Chit Maung, the parliamentary secretary of the minister of defence to negotiate the purchase. At the end of the visit an agreement was signed for the sale of Spitfires with their weapons and ammunition and for the despatch of cadets from Burma to undergo training in Israel in flying and aircraft maintenance. (See a report on the visit of the Burmese delegation, 7 May 1954, 130.02/2394/25.)
3. On the visit of the delegation, which arrived in Israel in June, see No. 331.

217. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 21 May 1954

Coded Tel. WIA439; Outg.: 93.01/2210/10

Summary

Eban refers to Sharett's telegram dealing with Israel's reaction to the arming of the Arab states.[1] He has long been of the opinion that Israel's policy should change from total opposition to accommodation – if Israel receives suitable compensation. This conclusion is given additional validity by the rumours of negotiations between the United States and Egypt, and by the position adopted by Jewish leaders who argue that it would be preferable for Israel to stop appearing to be opposing the defence of the region and to start demanding participation in this defence, or, at least, demanding compensation for the arming of the Arabs. Nevertheless, this change in policy should be deferred until the matter of the supply of the F-86 planes is cleared up,[3] so that a favourable decision on this should not be construed as compensation to Israel.

Notes

1. Sharett wished to know if they agreed with the three lines of reasoning which he had proposed for action against the arming of Iraq (see No. 192 and n. 2.), or whether in their view it was still too early to drop these hints which would give the impression of compromising with the supply of arms to Iraq in exchange for a similar form of supply to Israel. (Telegram to the embassy in Washington, 17 May 1954, 130.09/2310/6.)
2. See No. 188 and n. 3.
3. See No. 215 and notes there.
4. It is unclear to which telegram Eban is referring, but he is referring to paragraph 202 (b) of the Mutual Security Act which had initially been omitted from the new draft text of the law; this paragraph demanded that the states in the Middle East who were receiving military aid make a commitment to use the arms only for internal security and self-defence and not to launch any kind of aggressive acts against other states.

218. M. Sharett [Jerusalem] to J. Nehru (New Delhi). 21 May 1954

Notes

1. See No. 204 and n. 2.
2. Nehru answered that it was possible that a misunderstanding had arisen in the conversation that had taken place between himself and U Nu. Although India had no basic objection to establishing diplomatic relations with Israel, such relations in the present situation "would not serve the cause we have at heart," and it was possible that at a appropriate time India might be of assistance in helping to settle the problems between Israel and the Arab states. (See Nehru to Sharett, 5 June 1954, 93.13/226/1.)

   On 22 June, David Hacohen met again with U Nu and handed him the exchange of letters between Sharett and Nehru. U Nu was angry and said, among other things, that Nehru's remarks had been brief and clear and there was no room for misunderstanding. U Nu wrote in this spirit to Sharett and added that he had the impression that Nehru had indeed been inclined to establish relations but had changed his mind after his return to New Delhi and consulting with his officials. (See letters of D. Hacohen to D. Lewin, 23 June 1954, and U Nu to Sharett, 24 June 1954, 93.13/226/1.)

219. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 23 May 1954

Coded Tel. 477; Outg.: 130.09/2310/6

Summary

Russell briefed Herzog on the Istanbul meeting,[1] where the main subject on the agenda was regional defence. The Americans are encouraged by their success in Iran in bringing about the downfall of Musaddeq[2] and they wish to adopt the same tactics in Iraq. The emphasis is now on the establishment of the Northern Tier, that is, increasing cooperation with Iran and Iraq. Other Arab states have also been mentioned, but those plans lie in the distant future. The Americans expect Iraq to join the Turkish-Pakistani treaty and expect Turkey to have a moderating influence on Iraq regarding its attitude towards Israel. Iraq will be supplied with arms only when the matter has been thoroughly studied and public opinion in that country prepared for this move. In any case, the final decision rests with the Department of State which will take into consideration positive developments in Iraq.

A new version of the Three Power Declaration was also discussed, which would include concrete guarantees to Israel that could be instantly implemented on demand. Russell said: "If America guarantees that an attack on one inch of your territory will mean American involvement, surely you will be satisfied." He asked what Israel's position is. Herzog repeated that Israel is totally opposed to the arming of the Arab states. Russell said that Israel is missing an opportunity because of this absolute opposition. He referred to Trudeau's hints about Israel's loyalty in an emergency, saying that they do not represent the opinion of the Department of State. Herzog's impression is that Israel's opposition to the supply of arms to the Arabs gives rise to a serious problem for America, and if Israel veers from this line its prospects for suitable compensation will diminish.[7]

Notes

1. In mid-May the conference of heads of United States missions in the Middle East convened in Istanbul. The Department of State was represented by Byroade.
2. Musaddeq was deposed from the premiership in Iran by the followers of the Shah in August 1953. Tudeh was the Communist party in Iran.
3. See No. 213.
4. See No. 192 and n. 1
5. See No. 214 and notes 2 and 4.
6. Jacob Herzog added further: "I gained the impression from Russell's remarks that the Americans are very troubled by our opposition to the arming [of the Arab states]. I am doubtful whether a change of approach on our part at this stage will hasten their appreciation of the need to give us tangible compensation. It seems to me that both from a tactical and businesslike standpoint it would be better for them to translate their professed willingness into concrete proposals to us, when two camps are facing them ... Israel, sticking to a line of total opposition on the one hand, and their friends, who use ... the fact that no guarantee has been given to Israel and our requests for arms have always been turned down, and so forth, on the other. If we now proceed to present demands from which our agreement to the principle of the arming of the Arab states will be inferred... we shall harm our ability to manoeuvre and our bargaining power..." Herzog added that the validity of these considerations depended on which version of the arming of the Arab states was the correct one, that of Trudeau, or that of Russell, and he suggested presenting this question officially at a high level. (Herzog to the Israel embassy in Washington, 24 May 1954, 130.02/2415/1.)
7. At a meeting the following day Russell reported also to Eytan on the meeting in Istanbul. To his informal question concerning Israel's attitude towards a new Three Power Declaration "with teeth", Eytan replied according to Sharett's instructions that just as the original declaration had not come at the instigation of Israel, so too the amended version did not have to be its responsibility but that of the Powers. Israel would not see in such a declaration a substitute for its demands in the sphere of military assistance and Israeli public opinion would find it hard to believe that the United States would enforce its clauses in the event of Arab aggression. Russell also

referred to the doubt expressed by Trudeau regarding Israel's position in the event of war between East and West, and said that the Department of State and the embassy in Israel had no doubts on this score, but that in Congressional circles doubts had arisen, in light of the fact that Israel had not sent soldiers to Korea, was opposed to the program of regional defence organization, and had contacts with Jews behind the Iron Curtain. (See summary of the conversation of Eytan with Russell on 24 May 1954, 130.02/2415/1.)

220. Memorandum on Public Relations.[1] 23 May 1954

Copy: 130.02/2440/2

Summary

Israel is facing a public relations problem, originating in the aftermath of the Qibya incident. Its reputation is now that of an aggressor and its communiqués have lost their credibility. Even if Israel's statements are one hundred per cent true, the reports by the U.N. Truce Supervisors which reject Israel's claims, intensify the atmosphere of mistrust. There is also an objective problem acting in the Arabs' favour. Thefts, minor incidents, or the murder or wounding of a single person do not arouse any interest, while Israel's retaliatory actions, even if smaller in scale than that at Qibya, are good ammunition for hostile propaganda. Something must be done to revive trust in Israel. It should be something very impressive that would create an atmosphere supportive of Israel's aims, among them the campaign against the arming of the Arab states and aid for the consolidation of Israel's economy.

It is proposed that the prime minister publish a declaration to the effect that Israel undertakes to issue strict instructions against retaliatory actions for a period of six weeks to two months and to exercise strict control over their implementation. This respite should enable the neighbouring states to take steps to stop acts of sabotage and murder once and for all. If there are no incidents during this period, then the Government of Israel undertakes to extend the truce; however, should the incidents continue, then Israel's military forces will be given a free hand against the aggressors.

This period of respite should be accompanied by a public relations campaign among journalists in Israel and abroad. Should it prove necessary, this declaration of a truce would allow Israel to take military action and to announce that this was done with the government's full knowledge and responsibility. Israel can then state the truth and Israel's spokesman can

anticipate the Arabs and ascribe the action to the Arabs' previous aggression. This policy will restore to a great extent belief in the veracity and accuracy of Israel's statements.

Notes

1. The memorandum was written following informal discussions of the Information Department people in the Prime Minister's Office and in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the participation of T. Kollek, H. Zinder, M. Perlman and others. It was given to Eytan, Lourie and the staff of the embassy in Washington for their assessment prior to being presented to the prime minister for his decision. The discussions were held after those who were dealing with the matter in the missions came increasingly to the conclusion that the Israel was having a difficult time attempting to explain the border incidents. After the Nahalin operation Harman wrote that were it not for the slaughter at Maale Aqrabim, and had only the incident in Kissalon preceded it, the reaction of public opinion to the operation would have reached similar or even greater proportions than after the Qibya operation, and the official explanation that the operation was local had been received with disbelief. He also saw practical benefit in that the initial news of an operation should break from the Israeli side. Herzog, for his part, saw the potential political difficulties arising from such information as Harman suggested, as being immeasurably graver than the losses incurred by the manner of the current information campaign, and he pointed to the difficulty of finding a balance between the need to give some kind of satisfaction to the demands of the majority of the public, that Jewish blood could not be shed unchecked, in order to placate it, and the need to take into account Israel's international position. Unconfirmed reports had also reached them from London that since the Nahalin incident the opinion in diplomatic circles was that Israel's responsibility for the border clashes was equal to that of the Arab states, and the attempts to explain that Israeli operations were in reaction to the opposing side were met with impatience and scepticism. (See Harman to the United States Division, 31 March 1954, 130.02/2429/6; Avner to Lourie, 6 April 1954, 93.04/41/14; Herzog to Harman, 22 April 1954, 130.02/2440/2; Herzog to the minister in Washington, 25 May 1954, 130.02/2399/2.) On the reactions to the proposals in the memorandum, see No. 243 and notes there.
2. The reference is to a Jordanian complaint to the Armistice Commission on 7 April regarding an alleged attack on the village of Husan. Israel denied that any such attack had been made from its territory.
3. See No. 205 and note 1.

221. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to N. Goldmann (Paris). 23 May 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2457/17

Summary

Sharett proposes that Goldmann meet Molotov in Geneva to discuss the problem of the emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel. Sharett thinks the time is opportune for raising this issue. On the one hand, there is Byroade's vicious speech in which he argued strongly against the emigration of Soviet Jewry. On the other hand, the Soviet Union is now making great efforts to gain the sympathy of the Western world. Perhaps it could be persuaded to win over American Jewry by opening its gates?

There are of course many questions of tactics. First, should the approach be made now with the risk of receiving a categorical refusal? In Sharett's opinion, Israel should persist in pestering the Soviets on this subject at every opportunity. Should the meeting be kept secret and should the Americans be informed? All these matters can be discussed and Goldmann's opinion on them may differ from Sharett's.

As to the issue itself, Sharett thinks the demand should be moderately worded. It would be preferable to limit it to the emigration of relatives, but these should include not only aged parents but also brothers and sisters. There is no need to specify the numbers involved, but if these come to one thousand a year it would mean a great deal to Israel and to the Jewish people. Ten thousand a year would be a real miracle. He is perhaps building castles in the air, but Zionists have always been dreamers. Sharett awaits Goldmann's reply by cable.[1]

Note

1. The idea of appealing to the Russians came from Livneh in a conversation with Sharett on 21 May. Goldmann's name was mentioned, after other possibilities had been ruled out, as also an intervention of Sharett himself. The letter before us reached Paris after Goldmann had left there. In the end, Sharett and Goldmann met in Israel on 31 May, and discussed the matter, and Goldmann agreed to try and see what he could do. It is not known whether such a meeting with Molotov did take place and if there was a follow-up to this step. (See M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. II, pp. 507 and 524 [Hebrew].)

222. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 24 May 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2434/5

Summary

Tekoah submits his comments on the talks with Johnston and on the water project, also referring to Sharett's telegram to Eban on this subject.[1]

He has in the past stated his reservations about Hammarskjöld's original proposals at the latter's meeting with Eban.[2] Now a number of later developments put the usefulness of further negotiations with the secretary-general still more in question. These are the secretary's noticeable retreat from his original position,[3] presumably as a result of Syrian objection to his proposals, and Israel's promise to the United States it would agree to put off the resumption of the work until after Johnston's visit, but would not let the summer go by. In his opinion, the negotiations with Hammarskjöld should continue in order to prevent his total abandonment of efforts to solve the Benot Yaaqov issue, but the best prospects for a far-reaching political solution lie rather in the talks with Johnston. The Adassiyya-Yarmuk plan should be discussed mainly with him.[4]

Notes

1. In telegram 473 Sharett responded to Eban's comment concerning the attitude of the U.N. secretary-general to the proposal of Adassiyya in exchange for Benot Yaaqov. (See No. 214 and n. 5.) He said that there was no doubt that the proposal had not come from the secretary-general but from other parties, and the secretary had only adopted it himself. The request from the United States to allow a survey in Israeli territory in connection with the Adassiyya project, testified to the fact that it too was contemplating the idea, and therefore it could be assumed with certainty that Johnston would bring up the question. (The telegram, dated 23 May 1954, 130.09/2310/6.)
2. See No. 183.
3. See No. 201.
4. Eban agreed that they would have to wait for the end of Johnston's visit, but that during the talks with him a number of things should be remembered: the idea of Adassiyya in exchange for Benot Yaaqov was the fruit of Dixon and Eysvoogel's thinking, and Hammarskjöld was the first to adopt it. Only afterwards was it also taken up by the Department of State and subsequently by Johnston. Hammarskjöld did not think much of the chances of the Johnston plan, rejected the very idea of an American initiative to solve the water problem, and favoured modest but practical agreements in the framework of the U.N. (See his telegram to Sharett, WIA443, 24 May 1954, 93.01/2210/10.) See also No. 223.

223. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 25 May 1954

Coded Tel. 482; Outg.: 130.09/2310/6

Summary

Sharett attempts to sum up the subject of the water plans.[1] An official publication of the experts' report by the secretary-general should be insisted upon, otherwise it will lose its importance. It should be put to Hammarskjöld that as far as the U.N. is concerned Israel feels free to resume the work, contingent on giving guarantees and he should be persuaded to instruct Bennike accordingly. If the secretary again raises his idea of involving the Security Council in the issue, he should be told that this would mean certain failure. If he raises the issue of Benot Yaaqov versus Adassiyya, Israel's argument should be that its right to complete the Benot Yaaqov project is absolute and not contingent on making concessions.

Johnston should be asked finally to set the date of his visit – in view of the rumours about its postponement. The Cotton Plan should be submitted to him and its advantages stressed as promising more available water than his own plan. Israel cannot accept his refusal to include the Litani River in the water plans as final. It should be explained to him that adopting the Cotton Plan would mean the diversion of the Litani water not to Israel but to an Arab state, and then Israel would act only as the carrier. As to the Benot Yaaqov issue, he should be told firmly that Israel will complete the project on the basis of the experts' report. It should also be explained that there is no linkage between the Benot Yaaqov project and the Adassiyya proposal and he should make this clear to the Arabs; in any case, they have no hope of getting Adassiyya without the Benot Yaaqov project being completed.[5]

Notes

1. See No. 222.
2. Eban argued along these lines in his conversation with Hammarskjöld on 1 June. The secretary replied that he was inclined to find a solution that would satisfy Israeli demands without angering the Arabs too much. As for the publication of the experts' report, he preferred to postpone it until the ground had been prepared to carry out the plan. (See telegram from Kidron, XA839, 1 June 1954, 93.01/2182/1.)
3. Plan for the Development and Utilization of the Water Resources of the Jordan and Litani River Basins, February 1954, drawn up by the American engineer Cotton at the invitation of the Israeli government, in reaction to the Main Plan. On the two plans see Introduction, pp. 22-23.

4. On 21 May the *New York Times* printed a report by K. Love, its Cairo correspondent, on an Arab plan for the development of the water sources in the Jordan Valley, prepared by a group of water experts from the Arab League. As distinct from the Main Plan, the Arab plan recommended to collect the Yarmuk River waters not in Lake Tiberias but in two reservoirs in a channel of the river itself with the help of the construction of two dams, one in the area of Ein Um Karein and the second in Adassiyya, for the use of Syria and Jordan; the construction of a dam on the Hatzbani River that would supply water to Lebanon, and a change in the ratio of the water distribution between Israel and the Arab states, with Israel being allocated about a fifth of the overall quantity of water. Immediately after the publication of the report the Department of State announced that it welcomed the constructive attitude evidenced by the Arab plan.
5. Even before these instructions of Sharett's were received, the embassy in Washington had also made recommendations of a similar nature. Eban believed that Johnston should be spoken to firmly before his departure, otherwise he would descend a steep slope of concessions to the Arabs; that his current plan was not acceptable to Israel since it did not allocate it enough water for its needs and any plan revised to Israel's disadvantage would be even more unacceptable; that any proposal of giving up territory, even of only a small tract of land, or allowing Syria to move nearer to the shore of Lake Tiberias, would be sufficient to doom the plan as far as Israel was concerned; and that the only solution was to broaden his plan by the inclusion of the waters of the Litani River or the realization of national projects with American assistance and postponing regional cooperation to a later date. (See Eban's telegrams, WIA449, WIA458, 25/26 May 1954, 93.01/2210/10.)

224. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. [25 May 1954]

Coded Tel. WIA455; Outg.: 93.01/2210/10

Summary

Several subjects were discussed at a meeting between Byroade and Eban:

Offshore procurement[2] – Eban said he had been told at the Department of Defense that a political decision is a prerequisite for an allocation to Israel in this framework. Byroade said he would check this but he is not optimistic because Congress is tending to cut these allocations.

The ambassador briefed Byroade on Trudeau's talks with Lavon and Dayan and on the astonishment and concern aroused in Israel by what he had said on the arming of Iraq and on attitudes towards Israel and towards the I.D.F.[3] Byroade replied that the supply of arms to Iraq would be limited in type and quantity; for instance, it would not include jet planes; in the future he will be willing to give Israel general information on the extent of this deal. As for Trudeau's comments, there is no doubt in the United States as to

Israel's will to fight. Regarding the main issue of Israel's role in America's strategic plans for regional defence, it should not be forgotten that the main responsibility for defence of the region is not America's. Byroade repeated on this occasion his well-known thesis that the United States will not allow the Arabs to grow too powerful and will not allow them to attack Israel. He referred to the Three Power Declaration and asked what Israel's position is on its boundaries being guaranteed by the Powers. Eban replied that Israel will address this question when it has received all the relevant details.

Byroade gave Eban information on the ambassadors' conference in Istanbul.[4] He said he was pleasantly surprised by the ambassadors' reports on the improvement in the attitude of the Arab countries towards the United States and it is a cause of satisfaction to him that the Department of State and the Administration have overcome Israel's opposition to the supply of arms to Iraq.

Additional subjects discussed were the Arab water plan,[5] the conference of Asian states in Colombo,[6] and the Pakistani attempt to convene a conference in Jerusalem.[7] Shiloah will cable separately on Blaustein's talk with Byroade.[8]

Notes

1. The reference is to telegram 447 of 24 May 1954 in which Herzog reported the main points of Byroade's' conversation with Eban on the same day. In addition to reacting to Trudeau's remarks during his visit to Israel, which are presented in greater detail in the document before us, Byroade justified the delay in replying to the matter of the purchase of F-86 aircraft, and promised to give an answer soon. (In File 130.09/2310/10.)
2. Offshore procurement – see No. 88 and n. 2.
3. See No. 213.
4. See Nos. 219, 242.
5. See No. 223 and n. 4. After hearing these remarks Eban protested in writing that the Department of State had approved as "constructive" a proposal that would turn Israel into a wilderness by rechanneling about 80 percent of the water flowing through it outside its territory. Byroade explained in a reply that they regarded the Arab position as constructive inasmuch as it inferred that the waters of the Jordan would be divided among the states concerned, but that they continued to consider the Main Plan the most effective basis for negotiation for the just distribution of the Jordan River waters. (See Eban to Byroade, 26 May 1954, 130.02/3694/8; Byroade to Eban, 28 May 1954, 130.02/3694/8.)
6. See No. 187, n. 1.
7. The reference is to the proposal of the Pakistani Foreign Minister, Zafrullah Khan, to convene an Moslem-Arab conference in the Old City of Jerusalem to discuss the question of Palestine since, according to him, in the view of his government the problem of Palestine was the most troubling problem in the Middle East, and the time had come for the Arab states to involve all the Moslems on this issue. Most of

the Arab states had agreed to the proposal, however Egypt had expressed reservations about the conference from the beginning, and later on suggested also inviting to the conference Asian, African and Latin American states, in order to remove from it its purely Moslem character. There were also reports that Britain had exerted pressure on Jordan to disassociate itself from the conference. (See Survey of the Research Division, 29 May 1954, 130.15/2563/18.)

8. Blaustein, who had been briefed by the embassy, met with Byroade the same day. He also gained a similar impression from the conversation, mainly that the United States government and particularly the defence establishment did not at this stage of the Israel-Arab relations consider Israel as a significant military factor. Byroade promised Blaustein to endeavour to ensure the freedom of Israel's shipping in the Suez Canal within the framework of the Anglo-Egyptian agreement, expressed interest in Blaustein's conversation with the Egyptian ambassador (No. 210), and welcomed the Egyptian suggestion that Blaustein should meet with Egyptian personalities and visit Egypt. (See Shiloah to Sharett and Eytan, WIA454, 25 May 1954, 93.01/2211/11.) See also No. 233.

225. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 25 May 1954

Notes

1. In the document before us, Eban replies to Elath's criticism of his analysis and to remarks made by Elliot to Elath – see No. 155 and n. 2.

   Elath maintained that the problem was not only the Middle Eastern policy of the United States in itself, but the dangerous impression it might make on the British in influencing their policy towards Israel. The recent events, such as the rapprochement between the United States and Pakistan, the developments in the "Northern Tier" plan and the decision to arm Iraq, reinforced the British impression from the Bermuda Conference and contradicted Eban's optimistic assessment. Byroade's speeches, in Elath's opinion, were the ideological presentation of this new approach. Nonetheless, long-ranging conclusions should not be drawn from these events, and he agreed with Eban's opinion that the United States policy towards Israel was and remained friendly in matters directly relating to the relations between them. (Elath's letter to Sharett, 12 May 1954, 93.04/39/1.)
2. No. 188.
3. The reference apparently is to Evan Wilson, the first secretary at the United States embassy in London (See in Elath's letter to Sharett, 12 May 1954, n. 1 above.)
4. In this telegram Eban expressed reservations about Elliot's analysis. In his opinion the United States policy towards Israel would continue to be reactive and not active, namely, it would try to avoid a head-on collision with Israel, and the danger would arise mainly from its reaction to changes in the existing situation on the part of Israel. (Telegram of 16 December 1953, in File 130.09/2314/5.)
5. Eban wrote to Elath that he was convinced that by implenting the right policy, at times bold and at times restrained, and by exploiting legal and political facts, such as the Armistice Agreements, or Israeli peace initiatives, and so forth, Israel had the power, even under the existing international circumstances, to ensure a measure of

basic cooperation with the Western powers, since it had no other support besides the Powers. Also, the fact that on a number of important occasions, such as the debates of the Security Council on the work in the Jordan River channel and the blockade of the Suez Canal, Israel stood shoulder to shoulder with the West, whereas the Arabs were isolated with the Soviets. If Israel could move to a track of positive thinking, it would not be surprising for it to find a basis for cooperation also in matters of regional defence, which at the present time represented a main source of contention with the Western Powers. (26 May 1954, 93.01/2215/13.)

226. Aide Mémoire by the Palestine Conciliation Commission to the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations. (New York, 25 May 1954)

Notes

1. See No. 41 and n. 2. The text of the declaration read by the chairman of the Conciliation Commission to Kidron at the meeting of the commission on 17 February, and which was given in writing to Eytan in Israel the next day, see in File 130.03/1965/7.)
2. After the Commission chairman, Ordonneau, had read this declaration to him, Kidron replied that it was not the Israeli government's intention to keep these accounts forever, that he was aware of the negotiations between the banks and the government and was happy to hear that the banks had suggested a way to solve the problem, but since the matter was both technical and financial in nature it would be better to conduct the negotiations in Israel between the banks and the Israeli authorities. (See Kidron's report to the U.N. Division, 26 May 1954, 130.03/1965/7.) Eytan's reply to the Commission chairman, see in No. 333.

227. East European Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Legation in Bucharest. 27 May 1954

Coded Tel. 220; Outg.: 130.09/2296/12

Summary

Sharett informs the Legation on steps being taken in Israel to arouse public opinion concerning the imprisoned Zionist activists in Romania. The leaders of the Romanian immigrant community have been on a hunger strike, which made headlines in the press and a considerable impression on the public. The matter has come up in the Knesset and speeches were made by the minister and by those Members of the Knesset who were among the hunger strikers.[1]

The subject has been referred for discussion in the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee.[2] Delegations from public bodies bring daily expressions of encouragement to the hunger strikers, and the prime minister will also appear there. Steps have been taken to assure the safety of the Romanian legation.

Notes

1. See No. 173 and note 1. Sharett delivered his speech in the Knesset on 24 May. The previous day about fifty former leaders of the Zionist Movement in Romania had begun a protest fast in Israel, which lasted for five days. There was no agreement on what further action to take. Sharett tried to urge action in the Western capitals by recruiting prominent personalities to appeal to the Romanian representatives, but the idea was received with scepticism. He himself expressed doubt about the success of the initiative to hold protest gatherings in the United States. Another suggestion by Sharett – to send a Note to the Romanian government, also failed to arouse enthusiasm among the relevant experts, who argued that such a Note would only worsen the position of the legation there. (See Sharett to Avigur, 30 May 1954, 130.02/2387/15.) See also No. 238.
2. See No. 266.

228. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 29 May 1954

Coded Tel 471; Outg.: 93.01/2210/10

Summary

At Eban's meeting with Lehman, the latter voiced some thoughts and criticisms about relations between Israel and the United States. In his opinion, the main cause for concern is not the attacks and criticisms by Israel's enemies or by those known to favour appeasement of the Arabs – but the sapping of the faith and confidence in Israel of Israel's friends. This is a result of the large number of border incidents in which Israel had been condemned as the guilty party. Israel's image as a law-abiding country has been thereby undermined, and the impression left is of unrestrained and violent behaviour. Israel's image had been clothed in an atmosphere of nobility, and if this image is shattered, the number of Israel's supporters the world over will greatly diminish. Jews in the United States share this concern and refrain from expressing this directly to Israel only because of their loyalty and feeling of partnership. Indeed, several of his Jewish friends have recently urged him to meet with the ambassador and convey their

concern to him. He well understands Israel's dilemma facing as it does constant provocations by its enemies, but the impression created by the reports from the area is that it is Israel which terrorizes its neighbours. In his reply, Eban emphasized that there are indeed grounds for an in-depth discussion with Israel's friends, including a meeting with members of the Senate (the object of the meeting with Lehman was to organize an informative conference with the Democratic senators). Eban promised to transmit Lehman's words to Israel verbatim.

As for Eban's own thoughts, he wishes to point out that the reports on military actions which result in continuous censure make negative impressions among American Jewry and in friendly circles. He queries whether these actions are carried out as a consequence of in-depth deliberations by the government, taking into account the impact of such actions on world public opinion, or whether the only consideration is to make its neighbours aware of Israel's might.

229. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 30 May 1954

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2377/2

Summary

Jordan has refused to undertake the commitments required under Article 35 of the U.N. Charter and has announced that it will discontinue participating in the debates at the Security Council.[1] Israel therefore proposes the following line of informing public opinion:

This is not an issue between Israel and Jordan but between Jordan and the United Nations, and between the United Nations and the other Arab states. Jordan's decision is in accordance with the general Arab policy.

Jordan's submission of a complaint to the Security Council was irresponsible from the very beginning, as it knew it had no intention of solving the conflict by peaceful means.

Jordan rejects a peaceful solution and thus reveals who is responsible for the situation on the border. Its reason for submitting the complaint against Israel was not the wish to pacify the border but the desire to use the U.N. as a platform for denigrating Israel.

Note

1. In a letter from the Jordanian ambassador in Washington to the president of the Security Council, 26 May 1954, U. N. document S/3219 (also in 130.02/2453/6). See No. 202 (Editorial Note) and No. 206.

230. Political Consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (Jerusalem, 30 May 1954)

Report: 130.02/2414/28

Summary

Those participating in the consultation were the director-general, Lourie, Levavi, and other senior officials.

The director-general said the problem is not so much relations between Israel and the United States, as the attitude of the United States towards Israel. The fears that were aroused with the change of the Administration have lately been proved justified. There are Byroade's speeches which cannot be easily ignored,[1] there are the remarks about Communism, and there is the attitude towards the I.D.F. – saying that it is a nice army but no use would be found for it in an emergency.[2] All these point to a certain tendency. This analysis must first be confirmed, and then questions should be asked as to what brought this situation about and what can be salvaged from it.

Levavi thinks that the reason behind this shift is the struggle between the blocs. The process had already begun towards the end of the previous Administration and the rise of the Republicans only strengthened this tendency. The United States intends to arm not only Iraq but all the Arab states. Egypt will be receiving aid as soon as they come to an agreement about the Suez Canal. What can be done about it is (a) more public relations activity in the United States, even partially at the expense of activity in the United Nations. (b) It is not enough to oppose the American scheme: an alternative plan should be submitted that would include the I.D.F.'s contribution in case of war. The argument must be refuted that the I.D.F. cannot be brought into action in case of a global conflagration by stating willingness to integrate it in an expeditionary force to Turkey and the Balkans. This would undermine the American concept, which excludes the I.D.F.'s participation in case of a global war.

M. Shalit argues that Israel's policy has always been defensive. An active policy should be adopted. It is not enough to cry out in protest against the

arming of the Arabs. A regional defence plan should be devised which should include both the Arabs and Israel. It is not enough to oppose the Arabs' water plans. A plan should be drafted which would include the Litani River and benefit the entire region. Public relations activity in the United States should be intensified. Extreme circumspection should be employed when using the influence of America's Jewry and this should not be done as a matter of routine.

Herzog has doubts about the Americans' sincerity. There have been cases when they said one thing and then did the opposite. There is also a certain element of provocation in their actions when they take steps which are not necessarily vital to their own interests in order to win the Arabs over. No conclusions can be drawn without thoroughly checking the American's intentions, in particular when it comes to the arming of Iraq and the other Arab states. Herzog thinks the policy of total opposition to the arming of the Arabs should continue but plans should be devised simultaneously for regional defence.[6]

Lourie argues that there is no possibility of changing the American line on the arming of the Arabs. The thing to do is to campaign for the supply of arms to Israel as well, and to demand practical guarantees.

Najar points to the political problem. The Americans are not making sufficient efforts to settle the Arab-Israeli issue, in contrast to their efforts to solve the conflict between Britain and Egypt. There is however one change for the better – the policy on Jerusalem.[7] This shows that the West is unwilling to try Israel too much.

The director-general sums up by saying that the purpose of the consultation was to clarify the thinking before the meeting with the minister, and therefore there will be no formal summing-up.

Notes

1. See Nos. 168, 198.
2. See No. 219.
3. See No. 225 and notes 1 and 4.
4. See No. 223 and note 4.
5. See No. 188, paragraph 3, No. 192, n. 1.
6. See No. 188, paragraph 7.
7. Since the beginning of the year there had been a thawing in various degrees of the boycott imposed by the foreign missions on Jerusalem (See No. 38.) The embassies of the Western powers had made a practical arrangement of regular social meetings that their representatives held in secret with Ministry of Foreign Affairs personnel in Jerusalem, at which current political matters were discussed. The French ambassador Gilbert attended these meetings in person.

On Independence Day, which fell on 5 May, most of the diplomatic representatives attended the reception at the president's residence in Jerusalem. On that occasion, Najar heard from Gilbert about a French initiative, that had already won the approval of the British: the staff of the embassies, apart from the ambassadors, would be allowed to go to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to deal with current matters, whereas the ambassadors would be permitted to visit all the state institutions except for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and they would be permitted to meet with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs personnel outside the Ministry premises. On May 21, Russell informed his colleagues that the United States would be a party to this arrangement. Meetings according to this arrangement were held from June onwards. (See Najar to the director-general, 18 May 1954; Lourie to Elath, 24 May 1954, both in File 93.04/39/19.)

8. Elath drew attention to rumours concerning a resumption of negotiations between Britain and Egypt on the agreement to evacuate the Suez Canal, and suggested bringing Israel's demands in this regard before the British as soon as possible. (See telegram to Lourie, No. 701, 26 May 1954, 130.09/2319/5.)

231. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 31 May 1954

Stenciled circular letter: 130.02/2414/3

Summary

Eytan briefs the missions on a discussion in depth about relations with China. The conclusion was that the time has not yet come to propose diplomatic relations, at least until the results of the Geneva Conference are known. At the same time, in view of the danger of the Arab states anticipating Israel, it is doubly important to demonstrate friendliness and goodwill towards Peking, without taking any overt and official step which could harm Israel's relations with the West in general and with the United States in particular. The representatives are therefore requested to strive for closer personal and social relations with their Chinese counterparts. If the Chinese themselves raise the matter of diplomatic ties, nothing definite should be said apart from expressing Israel's wish for friendship with China as with all progressive nations. Nothing should be said which could be construed as a commitment or even a hint that the question of diplomatic relations had been discussed in Israel.[1,2]

Notes

1. This resolution was adopted in the Ministerial Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee on 25 May. After the senior echelons in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had concluded that steps should be taken in order to pre-empt the Arabs in China, Sharett sought the Committee's approval for a resolution informing China of Israel's readiness in principle to establish diplomatic relations, without putting this into effect immediately. However this suggestion was not accepted in order not to serve as a first point of entry for Communist China to the Middle East. (See M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. II, p. 515 [Hebrew]; Lewin to D. Hacohen, 28 May 1954, 93.13/226/3.)
2. On the same day, Daniel Lewin, at Sharett's behest, instructed David Hacohen to bring up in a private conversation with the Chinese representative in Burma the subject of the commercial delegation, and to intimate that Israel would see the commercial talks as good way to increase friendly ties and to foster relations in other areas as well.

   David Hacohen met with the Chinese representative again on 15 June. The latter said that he had no information to give with regard to the commercial delegation, but promised that this should not be viewed as a change of attitude and that they did wish to trade with Israel. He explained that his minister of foreign affairs was now in Geneva and engaged in affairs of the utmost importance, and on his return he would write to him especially. In the meantime he asked Hacohen to remember that the Chinese people felt friendly towards Israel. (See correspondence between Lewin and Hacohen, in File 93/13/226/3.)

232. Israel Embassy in Washington to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 31 May 1954

Coded Tel. WIA478; Outg.: 93.01/2210/10

Summary

Eban and Shiloah have had a meeting with Johnston and expressed to him Israel's concern about the situation, which has deteriorated since they last met,[1] particularly in comparison with the enthusiasm with which the Arab water plan had been greeted in the United States.[2] Eban asked about the Arab committee or committees that submitted the plan and whom they represent: the Arab League or the Arab states. Johnston looked confused and said that the reaction of the Department of State to the Arab plan was a mistake owing to a hitch and the lack of experience of a certain official. The committee which published the plan belongs to the Arab League but the committee which he is to meet in Cairo does not.

Eban protested vigorously against the situation which had evolved where there were so to speak two plans: the American one and the Arab one. He

then informed Johnston of the Israeli plan, as he had been instructed to do by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.[3] He expressed the hope that the response of the Department of State to this plan would be favourable, as it has been approved by world-renowned experts. The Israeli plan takes into consideration the needs of all parties, while the American plan does not meet Israel's needs and could become the focus of a serious conflict. Johnston then grew very angry and said he would cancel his trip to the Middle East if Israel considers using the Litani River waters as a sine qua non. Later, after having heard more explanations, he calmed down and said he would also discuss the Litani River plan in Israel with a view to using its waters at a later stage, but the project has to start without the Litani. He then turned to discussing the changes in his plan which he said would ensure a larger allocation to Israel. He also gave some explanations on the Adassiyya dam and said Israel has the right to oppose work in that part of the Demilitarized Zone, but it would make things easier for the Benot Yaaqov project.

Eban summed up Israel's position:

The water allocation for Israel is unsatisfactory.

Israel will not agree to any territorial changes at the convergence of the [three] borders or on the 10 meter strip[6] on the eastern shore of Lake Tiberias.

Israel will not resume work at Benot Yaaqov until after Johnston has left, but it does intend to resume it soon and it is most desirable that his visit does not prove a hindrance.

Johnston replied that the idea of making territorial changes has been abandoned. He agreed to submit to the U.N. his positive opinion regarding the Benot Yaaqov project.[7]

Notes

1. See No. 196.
2. See No. 223, n. 4.
3. See No. 223 and n. 3
4. The reference is to the plan of the Technical Cooperation Administration for the utilization of the waters of the Litani River for agriculture in Lebanon. The plan was due to be presented to the Department of State shortly (Details of the plan in File 130.13/2592/25.)
5. The meeting-point of the borders between Jordan, Syria and Israel, close to the estuary of the Yarmuk into the Jordan River.
6. The area of Israeli sovereignty on the northeastern shore of Lake Tiberias.
7. On the conversation between Johnston, Byroade and Hammarsjköld on 2 June, in which these matters were also discussed, see *FRUS 1952-54*, Vol. IX, (part 1), No. 829. After Johnston came out of his meeting with Hammarsjköld he told reporters that he was travelling to the Middle East with three plans: the Main Plan, the Israeli plan (Cotton Plan), and the Arab plan. (See telegram from Kidron, 2 June 1954, 130.02/3688/11.)

233. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 1 June 1954

Coded Tel. 509; Outg.: 130.09/2310/6

Summary

Sharett refers to telegram 454 from Washington:[1]

He states that Israel's arguments should be along the following lines:

1. The decision not to involve Israel, because of the difficulties in moving the I.D.F. through Arab countries, is a sign of narrow mindedness, as it is always possible to transport military forces by sea or by air.

2. If their intention really is full-scale war, it is surprising that they rely on broken reeds and disparage the only force in the area with power of endurance.

3. They ignore the possibility of using Israel as a "workshop" and exploiting its transport facilities.

4. The argument against the impossibility of transferring Israeli forces is not relevant as regards the air force and it should therefore be strengthened.[2]

The demand for credit over a period of three years for the purchase of airplanes, as per telegram 499,[3] can be made as part of the argument put forth in item 4 above. Israel is prepared to receive these aircrafts free of charge as part of its military aid, but would be willing to accept credit if this would be more convenient for them. Such a decision would be a further test of their willingness to aid Israel parallel to that being given to Iraq. This point should be stressed, but the campaign against the supply of arms to the Arabs should not cease.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 224 and n. 8.
2. Prior to Sharett's instructions there was an exchange of notes between him and the Minister of Defence Lavon on the question of how to act in view of the widely-held concept in the Pentagon that Israel was not to be taken into account with regard to regional defence, since it would be unable to transfer its forces, in case of need, via the Arab states to the north of it. Sharett suggested that although the chief of staff, in his projected visit to the United States, would present a demand for the bolstering of Israel's land forces, however if he encountered such a pretext he should place the emphasis on the demand to develop the air force, to which this pretext did not apply. He should also draw their attention to the possibility of transporting the land forces by aircraft. Lavon questioned the possibility of exploiting this situation to strengthen Israel's air power, since in this area, as in the maritime area, the Western

powers did not need Israel. On the other hand, he suggested adopting another line of argument, which he had outlined to Trudeau (see No. 213) whereby Israel had an important role as a second line of defence in the event of war and the collapse of the front line defence of the Northern Tier. (See exchange of notes between the minister of foreign affairs and the minister of defence, 27–28 May 1954, CZA, A245/195.)

3. Following talks with the company supplying the F-86 aircraft, which had explained that it would only sell these aircraft for cash, the minister of defence instructed the military attaché in Washington, Ch. Herzog, to ensure that the basic positive decision would be accompanied by agreement for payment by credit over several years. (See the minister of defence's telegram to the embassy in Washington, No. 499, 28 May 1954, 130.09/2310/6.)

4. After consulting about telegram 499 (see n. 3 above), Herzog recommended acting first of all to obtain the basic decision on the sale of the aircraft, which had not yet been taken, whilst postponing the financial arrangements to a later date, since raising them at this stage might serve as a reason for rescinding the decision. In the event of an affirmative decision, the financial negotiations should be conducted at the place of supply, in Canada. (See telegram to Ch. Herzog, No. 482, 1 June 1954, 130.09/2310/10.)

   This recommendation did not change the instructions from Israel. Lavon requested Eban to make every effort to obtain clear answers concerning the granting of a license for the sale of the F-86 aircraft and the payment conditions in keeping with Israel's financial capability. (See telegram 523 to Washington, 4 June 1954, 130.09/2310/6.) See also No. 242 and n. 6.

234. A. Eban (New York) to the United States Division. [1] June 1954

Coded Tel. XA841; Outg.: 93.01/2182/1

Summary

He has talked with Zellerbach and Dean regarding United States policy in the region. He reiterated what he had said to Zellerbach in San Francisco[1] and pointed out the mishaps arising out of American policy during the past year. He stated that Israel requests a more balanced approach. Dean listened attentively and showed an understanding of the situation. He revealed that he had initiated the proposal for military aid to India as a counterbalance to the provision of weapons to Pakistan and wondered why the secretary of state had not followed a similar policy regarding Iraq and Israel. It was decided that Dean would be given time to consider what he had heard and if his decision is positive, he and Zellerbach will be given a detailed memorandum to be submitted to the secretary of state. In the meantime he presented them a summary of his arguments.[2]

Eban met with Proskauer who will be going to Washington for talks with Dulles and Byroade.[3] Proskauer agrees with the efforts to recruit Dean and Zellerbach.[5]

Notes

1. The contact with Arthur Dean and David Zellerbach had been made at the initiative of Philip Ehrlich. The latter had met with Ben-Horin in March 1954 and expressed willingness to assist Israel in its political struggle on condition that he was convinced that this policy really did conform to American interests. To this end he suggested exploiting his connections with Dean, in the past Dulles's partner, and with Zellerbach, "a man with outstanding contacts among the top echelons of the American Government, chosen at times for special assignments, which would make possible in his view direct access to Dulles and even to the President." After the meeting in San Francisco on 8 May, Zellerbach expressed willingness to play his part in helping to implement the plan which Eban had outlined, and asked to include Dean in the consultations. (See Ben-Horin to Eban, 30 March 1954, 130.02/2456/16; Eban's telegrams to Sharett, WIA371, 2 May 1954, 93.01/2210/10; WIA429, 19 May 1954, 93.01/2211/1.)
2. See Eban's memorandum "An American Policy in the Middle East," 2 June 1954, and Eban's accompanying letter to Sharett, 10 June 1954, 130.02/2403/18.
3. On Proskauer's talks in the Department of State, see No. 250 and n. 1.
4. See No. 198, and n. 1.
5. On 10 June Shiloah reported via Ehrlich that Dean and Zellerbach had accepted the argument and evaluation presented by Eban verbally and in writing. Dean had already seen Dulles, and Zellerbach would be seeing him the following week; their first demand – an agreed declaration, very soon, which would reaffirm the United States' political principles in a manner which would allay Israeli concerns, and expunge the distorted impression created throughout the world. (See telegram WIA526, 93.01/2211/11.)

235 A. Eban (New York) to W. Eytan. 1 June 1954

Coded Tel. XA842; Outg.: 93.01/2182/1

Summary

In a conversation with the Emperor of Ethiopia at a reception held by the U.N. secretary-general and members of the Security Council, Eban raised the issue of relations with Israel.[1] The emperor stated that his sympathies are with Israel because of their common fate and past memories. Israel must understand the reasons that prevent full recognition and exchange of representatives, but the time has now come and recognition is imminent. He also stated that he is pleased with the development of commercial ties. After

he left the emperor, Eban approached the Ethiopian representative at the U.N. and expressed his satisfaction with the meeting and the decision. The latter received the information without comment. Eban asks whether he should write to the foreign minister to thank him for arranging the meeting, even though he was not present, and at the same time put in writing the fact that he has received a definite promise from the emperor. Requests instructions.[2]

Notes

1. On Eban's previous conversations regarding the relations with Ethiopia see Vol. 7, No. 482, Vol. 8, No. 114. See also Shimoni's letter to the M.F.A., 14 January 1954, 130.02/2414/14.
2. Eban's letter to the Ethiopian foreign minister has not been traced. Ethiopia recognized Israel de facto when it agreed to establish an Israeli consulate-general in Addis Ababa (the consulate-general of Ethiopia had existed in Jerusalem since the British Mandate days), and the consuls-general of the two countries presented their credentials simultaneously to the ministries of foreign affairs in June 1956. Ethiopia recognized Israel de jure only in October 1961, and then agreed to raise the status of the Israeli legation to that of embassy, but continued to be represented in Israel by a consul-general. See No. 428.

236. E. Najar (Jerusalem) to the Israel Consul in Vienna. 2 June 1954

Copy: 130.02/2411/10

Summary

Najar writes in connection with relations with Austria, in light of negotiations concerning reparations from that country.[1]

It is true that the renewal of negotiations by the Jewish organizations regarding heirless Jewish property could be used for establishing diplomatic relations with that country. It is also true that this should be done prior to the renewal of negotiations, because serious disagreement during such negotiations could be detrimental to relations between the two countries. However, if the matter is examined in the wider context of relations between Israel and the German-speaking peoples, the picture changes.

Negotiations with Austria have caused negative repercussions in Germany. There are those who argue that Germany erred in the speed with which it reached agreement with Israel, and claim that they should learn from the Austrians who are in no hurry, have adopted an adamant stand and

in the end will pay very little. All this had done them no harm. Responsible German authorities have stated more than once that they are unable to comprehend the distinction Israel makes between Germany and Austria, whose attitude during the course of the war was no different from that of the Germans. They find it difficult to understand why Israel has a consulate in Vienna, and would certainly not be able to understand the establishment of full diplomatic relations between Austria and Israel.

Thus, at present, he is unable to see any possibility of changing the framework of relations with Austria without undermining relations with Germany. He believes that the Austrians also understand this. On the other hand, relations between the two countries are important and should be strengthened within the existing consular framework, which makes this possible.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 72 and n.1. The letter referred to here was not traced, but an excerpt from it appears in another letter from Eshel, the Israel consul in Vienna, to the West European Division: "Almost certainly the forthcoming negotiations will not bring the views of the two sides closer on the question of heirless property. I am also doubtful whether on questions of legislation Austria will make reasonable concessions." (See Eshel's letter to the West European Division, 5 July 1954, 130.02/2411/10.)
2. Eshel did not take the reaction of West German public opinion lightly and saw in it an important consideration, but remained convinced that the very fact of establishing the Israeli consulate in Vienna had been seen as a first step to diplomatic relations; by establishing regular relations with Austria Israel had publicly evinced a different attitude towards it than towards Germany, and the Austrians hoped that in the course of time complete normalization would ensue. He drew attention to the fact that the relations with the Austrians were growing chillier as a result of the deadlock in relations, and suggested as a compromise solution to turn the consulate into a consulate-general. (See Eshel to the West European Division, 15 June 1954, 130.02/2411/10.)

237 A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 4 June 1954

Coded Tel. WIA502; Outg.: 93.01/2210/12

Summary

He had met with the prime minister of Turkey who was visiting Washington. He had expressed his appreciation of relations between Israel and Turkey, without which Israel would be completely isolated in the area. It was for this very reason that Israel was concerned at the policy of the West, led by the United States, to have Turkey join an alliance with Iraq and Pakistan who were hostile to Israel. Israel was also concerned at the arming of Iraq and Pakistan's anti-Israel machinations.

The Turkish prime minister replied in a friendly and considered tone: There was no possibility that Pakistan and Iraq would persuade Turkey to adopt an anti-Israel attitude. The Arab world was deeply entangled in negative attitudes, both towards Israel and the defence of the region. America and Turkey were involved in an endeavour to extricate them from these negative attitudes. The arming of Iraq was of no military importance, and was mainly of political value. Even if it did receive arms in considerable amounts it would be restricted by firm undertakings not to carry out acts of aggression. He believed that when the time comes Israel too would take its place in the defence of the region.

He also spoke about Israel's status in the region. He considered the Arab League's defence treaty of little value. It is counter-balanced by the Three Power Declaration, which he, unlike Eban considers to be of military importance, at least regarding the possibility of French and British intervention (although not that of the United States). He revealed that the Turkish government is considering joining the Three Power Declaration.[2]

He ended by stressing that in the near future it will become apparent who was right, America and Turkey, who are convinced that Iraq and Pakistan would become more moderate, or Israel. If they join us, he said, they would have to accept the basic principles of our policy.

Notes

1. According to the treaty signed in 1930 between Britain and Iraq, which was in force until April 1955, each side undertook to come to the assistance of the other in the case of war.
2. On the Three Power Declaration of May 1950 see No. 1 and n. 3. In a consultation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the opinion was formulated that perhaps there was room for a discreet conversation in the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs whose

aim was to express the satisfaction felt by Israel with the very idea of Turkey's joining the three Big Powers in the Middle East, and at the same time to state that it would be appropriate, in view of that possibility, that the status of the Turkish representative in Israel should be equal to that of the Western representatives. (See letter to Levavi, 29 June 1954, 130.02/2412/1.)

238. D. Laor (Bucharest) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 4 June 1954

Coded Tel. 179; Inc.: 130.09/2296/13

Summary

Laor reports that he was summoned urgently to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and handed a Note to be sent to the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Note relates to what is termed the "defamation campaign" being carried on against the People's Republic of Romania over the punishment of "several elements found guilty of espionage against the Romanian State." This defamation campaign, it states, could be harmful to relations between the two states, especially as this is an illegal attempt to intervene in the internal affairs of another country. The government of Israel is requested to take the appropriate steps to put an end to this hostile activity directed against the People's Republic of Romania, and it will be held responsible for events arising out of such activity. The Note also refers to "the desire of thousands of families in Israel to return to the People's Republic of Romania."

Laor asks whether this Note would affect Israel's desire to sign a commercial treaty with Romania,[2] and whether they wish to react to the Note. He also suggests that the reference to the desire of families to return to Romania should be exploited to raise the issue of immigration to Israel and the unification of families.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 227 and n. 1.
2. On 7 May the Romanians informed the Israel legation of their readiness to sign a trade agreement with Israel and to send a delegation to Israel for this purpose. On 11 May the East European Division informed the legation that it agreed in principle to send a delegation, but in view of the trials of the Zionists there was no public possibility to enter into negotiations with Romania at this time, and they would have to wait, but without breaking off contact. Only on 1 July did the East European Division instruct the legation to announce its agreement to the delegation's arrival.

The Romanian delegation arrived in Israel at the beginning of August, and on 9 September a trade and payments agreement was signed between the two states in the amount of 2.5 million dollars for each side. (See exchange of telegrams on this matter in Files 130.09/2296/12, 130.09/2296/13.)

3. Israel's reply see No. 286.

239. Y. Palmon [Paris] to G. Rafael. [5 June 1954]

Copy: 130.15/3774/40

Summary

Palmon reports on his meeting on 5 June together with G. Rafael with three Palestinian leaders, Aziz Shihadeh, Mahmed Yahya and Daud Dajani.[1] The first two are leaders of the Refugee Congress,[2] and are wealthy and hold positions of influence among the refugees.

At an earlier meeting on the morning of 5 June, with Dajani, Palmon learned that on their way to this meeting, the three men had consulted in order to formulate their demands. They believe that first of all the political issue must be solved by the establishment of a Palestinian Arab state on lands now being held by Jordan and Egypt. In order to obtain the support of the Palestinians and the Arab states, they hope that Israel will make territorial concessions, even if only symbolic. They request that Israel organize British and American support for this plan, through a move that would take place at the United Nations.

Palmon is well aware that this plan cannot be implemented, because of the opposition of the Arab states and especially Egypt and Jordan and the opposition of the United States and Britain to the establishment of such an additional abortive Arab state that would complicate their relations with the Arab countries and impose financial and political burdens. However, as he wished to create the impression that Israel would support this plan – of course without undertaking territorial concessions – he requested that Dajani explain to his companions that raising the political issue at the forthcoming meeting would lead to failure for the following reasons:

1. The Refugee Congress is not a sovereign body and the Palestinian Arabs do not constitute a united body. So long as the Palestinian Arabs do not have such a body, mutual agreement and aid, but not official agreements or contracts could be forthcoming.

2. If Israel were to enter into discussions on political issues at the forthcoming meetings, and the matter of concessions were raised, this would sooner or later come to the attention of the Americans or the British. They

would use this to bring pressure to bear on Israel to make concessions to Egypt and Jordan, with the result that the Palestinians would lose out.

He therefore proposed that the meeting should discuss ways and means to strengthen those Palestinians who desire to seek a solution to matters in dispute by peaceful means, in order that they achieve the status of a party recognized by the United Nations.

At the meeting of the full forum the Arabs put their approach as follows:

1. The Palestinian Arabs are disappointed at the attitude of the Arab states, which instead of coming to their assistance, are benefiting from their plight.

2. For this reason they consider it essential that they attain a political status in the Arab area of Palestine to enable them to negotiate with the parties concerned as they think best.

3. The Palestinians believe that the possibility of attaining a solution lies in direct negotiations with Israel.

4. The Arab countries, especially Jordan, object to the above solution and therefore instigate border incidents.

The Israeli reply was as follows:

1. The right of the Palestinians to the above approach seems clear, but Israel is prepared to make peace with whoever is willing and able to do so.

2. The border attacks, carried out mainly by Palestinians, only hinder a solution.

3. If Palestinian Arabs, or some of them, really desire to reach solutions to matters in dispute by peaceful means, Israel is prepared to assist them to constitute a party recognized both by the Palestinians and others.

During the course of the discussion, the Palestinians spoke of the difficult conditions they have encountered in Jordan, where in fact they have functioning as a semi-underground movement. They reported that they have presented their plan to Dulles and other Americans as well as to Morrison, who caused its failure because of lack of caution. They raised problems concerning the rehabilitation of refugees, blocked bank accounts and compensation for absentee owner property. Concerning compensation, they stated that the matter is most complicated and they wish to discuss it in a wider context. The matter of blocked bank accounts is simpler, and they wish to enter negotiations directly with Israel on this issue, and not under the auspices of the Arab states. An undertaking was made to the effect that if they submit a request to the Conciliation Commission on this matter, Israel will agree to enter negotiations with them and will do all in its power to ensure that the results are more positive than in the past.

Finally, the matter of border attacks was discussed, and the Palestinians undertook to take steps to reduce them, although their present weakness should be taken into account. They hope that Israel will realize that they were not the instigators.

It was agreed that the contact would continue through the services of D. Dajani.

Notes

1. The meeting came about through the initiative of Rafael, who suggested to Sharett to pay compensation to big property owners and influential persons among the Arab refugees with the aim of harnessing them to political and settlement activity among the other refugees. It was decided that Palmon, who had been appointed as coordinator of Arab activity in Europe, based in London, would put out feelers regarding this idea on condition that he appeared to do so in a private capacity, without any governmental responsibility and interested in checking the state of affairs for himself, and to report to his government, without any commitment. (See Rafael to the M.F.A., 23 May 1954, 130.02/2399/2; director-general's circular to the Israel missions, 14 September 1954, 130.15/3738/1; Moshe Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. II, p. 506 [Hebrew].)
2. The General Refugee Congress for Palestine was established in March 1949 at a meeting of refugee representatives in Jordan. Among the resolutions adopted at that meeting: acceptance of the 1947 partition plan as a solution for the Palestine question; acceptance of the December 1948 resolution of the U.N. General Assembly concerning the right of return of the refugees and its immediate implementation; and a declaration that the council and executive committee chosen by the Congress would be the sole representatives of the refugees for dealing with their problems (according to a report of Shihadeh and Yahya to the British Labour Party, end of 1954 or beginning of 1955, 130.15/3774/40.) As from 1950 the Jordanian government banned the Congress's activity.
3. More on dealing with the question of the blocked accounts – See No. 333.

240. W. Eytan [Jerusalem] to Major-General V. Bennike (Jerusalem). 6 June 1954

Notes

1. See No. 179.
2. See No. 229 and n. 1.
3. See No. 249 and notes.

241. M. Kidron (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 8 June 1954

Coded Tel. X858; Inc.: 130.09/2331/11

Summary

Met with Bunche who gave him the essence of the Dixon-Eysvoogel report,[1] apologizing for the delay. The document has also been given to the Syrians and accorded the status of a "secret document".[2] Kidron requested that it be made public, as Israel had demanded in the past, but Bunche replied that the report is no more than an internal working paper and contains internal discussions whose publication could be embarrassing. The report discusses the Benot Yaaqov project only and asserts that there is absolutely no difficulty in ensuring a supply of water to the Butheiha area. Kidron asked if the report deals with the Benot Yaaqov project alone, what is the meaning of the proposal to balance the Israeli project with the Adassiyya project.[3] Bunche replied that the Adassiyya project, which was included in the first draft, has been removed from the second draft. In his opinion the experts do not have the authority to discuss this matter since it is a political issue. The secretary-general's discussion with the Israeli representatives, in which he made a connection between the two projects, had been held during the interim period between the two drafts and it is quite probable that the secretary-general had been put off because of various difficulties that had arisen. Kidron replied that in Israel's opinion there is no connection between the two projects and that it should be clear to all that Israel will not let another summer pass without completing the digging. Bunche replied that this is clear both to him and the secretary-general.[4]

Notes

1. On the mission of Eysvoogel and Dixon see No. 138 and n. 1 there, and No. 183. A report, a summary of which was cabled to Israel, included recommendations for ensuring the rights of water use by the Arabs in Butheiha and other places and the demand that Israel's water project, if carried out, should be conducted under the supervision of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization. (See Kidron telegram to the M.F.A., X859, 8 June 1954, 130.09/2331/11.)
2. No. 223.
3. On this conversation, which was held on 1 June, see Kidron's report, X839, 93.01/2182/1).
4. See n. 1 above.

242. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 9 June 1954

Coded Tel. WIA513; Outg.: 93.01/2210/12

Summary

He met with Byroade for an hour and a half.

1. Defence of the Middle East. At the Istanbul Conference[1] a lively debate had been held on whether to continue the policy of military treaties with the Arab states or to stop the process. It was decided to view the arming of Iraq as an isolated action that was bound up with the Northern Tier, but not to offer military aid to the other Arab states, nor to propose to the other Arab countries that they join the Northern Tier. Regarding Iraq, the survey mission had returned and would submit its proposals for the implementation of the agreement. However, the decision was in the hands of the Department of State which would also consider Iraqi policy towards Israel, prior to making a decision about the timing and extent of aid. At all events, the amount of arms was negligible and no attention needs to be paid to items in the press relating to this issue. In reply to a question by Eban, he stated that the main reason for halting the process of supplying arms to the Arab countries was concern over flare-ups on the Israeli border. In the meantime, the Department of State was working towards getting Iraq to join the Ankara treaty and detaching it from the anti-Israel front.

2. Israel-Arab relations. It was agreed that the time was not opportune for efforts to solve basic problems. Efforts would be made to improve the situation on the border, and an official proposal would be submitted to both sides. He hinted that the reaction of Jordan was not encouraging, especially regarding the main proposal for marking the border between Israel and Jordan.

3. The Three Power Declaration. A discussion was held concerning renewal and strengthening of the Declaration. The problem was that the President of the United States did not have the authority to make declarations which would require the involvement of American forces. Deliberations were continuing, and he had tried a number of times to clarify Israel's attitude, but Eban had been careful to avoid making any commitments. Byroade stated that the reports from Ankara about Turkey joining the Declaration were exaggerated, and discussions were continuing with London and Paris.

Eban told him about his meeting with the Prime Minister of Turkey[4] and Byroade expressed interest in the matter. He advised that Menderes'

statement that Turkey would not be infected by the plague of anti-Israeli policy should be taken seriously. Eban referred to Menderes' statement that Turkey could not conceive of Israel's not being involved in defence of the region. Byroade agreed. When asked why the United States did not state this publicly and why no reference is made to Israel's involvement, Byroade replied that discussions would be held with Dayan during his visit to the United States.[5]

They also discussed the supply of airplanes;[6] a separate telegram would be sent regarding this, as well as about the grant.[7] Regarding the Grant-in-Aid, he stated that the reasons for its reduction were economic, and if Israel was able to convince them that its economic situation does not warrant reduction, all the better.

Eban requests comments on this discussion.[9]

Notes

1. On the Istanbul Conference see No. 219 and notes there. For the American version of the conversation before us, see *FRUS 1952-54*, Vol. IX (part 1), No. 831.
2. See No. 172 and n. 1.
3. See No. 256 and n. 1.
4. See No. 237.
5. On the chief of staff's visit to the United States, see No. 282.
6. Regarding the aircraft, see No. 233. Byroade said that he himself personally approved of the sale of the aircraft, and the matter had been submitted to the Pentagon with a positive recommendation from the Department of State based mainly on the need to prove to Israel that its security was not being neglected; however there the request had met with the opposition of the Air Force, because of the unwillingness to create a precedent towards the Arab states and from fear of losing the base in Dahahran in Saudi Arabia. Dulles, who had endorsed the Department of State's positive recommendation did not reveal eagerness to fight against the Air Force, particularly in view of the fact that Israel had the possibility of purchasing aircraft in other places. Eban, who had received a reserved promise from Byroade that he would act to obtain the military equipment from Canada, recommended acting at the same time in France, Washington, and Canada, without making a commitment in any of the places. (See Eban's telegram to the United States Division, WIA512, 9 June 1954, 93.01/2210/12.)
7. See No. 253.
8. See No. 213.
9. See No. 246.

243. R. Shiloah (Washington) to J. Herzog. 10 June 1954

Orig.: 130.20/2460/3

Summary

Shiloah comments on a number of issues and proposals that had been raised recently concerning Israel's foreign relations.

1. The proposal to declare a respite in reactions to hostile attacks on the border.[1] Despite the boldness and vision of this proposal, the Israeli team in the United States had come to the conclusion that the negative aspects were greater than the positive. There was no guarantee that the Arab states would honour the cease-fire that Israel would impose on itself and there was apprehension concerning the steps Israel would have to take when the cease-fire was violated. The very declaration of a cease-fire implies an undertaking towards the people to take drastic steps if it failed. There was also doubt as to whether such a step would be advantageous as regards Israel's standing in the press and public opinion. Perhaps there would be quiet for a few weeks, but as soon as Israel renewed its activities it would be condemned as the aggressor.

Perhaps the time had come for Israel to reassess its security policy, but until a new security policy was decided upon, efforts should be devoted to introducing new methods of dealing with foreign correspondents and to ensure that Israel's version of the situation should appear as soon as possible, and without unnecessary self-justification.

2. The status of Jerusalem. He was aware of instructions from the Ministry not to take up the matter of recognition of Jerusalem with the Department of State until the time came for the new United States ambassador to present his credentials. He was of a different opinion, and he believed that from a tactical point of view there should be no letting up on the matter. To his knowledge the Department of State would be ready to come to a reasonable arrangement. He suggests that clarifications be initiated as soon as possible, without waiting for the arrival of the new ambassador, which could be postponed for several months.[2]

3. Johnston's visit.[3] He wishes to stress that plans for regional development in the Middle East and especially irrigation plans had become a central factor among influential persons in United States government circles. The doctrine is that peace in the region cannot be attained without a major change in the economic and social situation. Thus the government is "sold" on the Jordan River project and this must be taken into account in all contacts with Johnston and, as far as possible, efforts made to cooperate with him.

4. Visit by Trudeau and speeches by Byroade.[4] As for the former, he believes that Trudeau's statements do not reflect the official policy of the United States, but they do reflect the doctrine hammered in to him by Wadsworth, Henderson, and others during the course of his visit to the Arab countries and Istanbul. The campaign Israel had begun after the speeches by Byroade should be continued. In his opinion, this activity could be beneficial but the Department of State is not certain that this is the correct road to follow. Israel's approach must be put forward, but it should be remembered that no American plan can be carried out that does not make provision for security interests in the Middle East and that does not make a serious American contribution to the Arab states.

Notes

1. See No. 220 and n. 1.
2. The details of the arrangements for regulating the working relations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the American embassy were given to Israel in a conversation Russell had with Eytan on 17 June. Under this arrangement, all the United States embassy staff, except for the ambassador, would be permitted to visit the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jerusalem, on condition that the arrangement involving meetings with senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign affairs in the liaison bureau in Tel Aviv would continue as before. The head of the embassy would visit the minister of foreign affairs in the Prime Minister's office. (See Eytan's report, 130.20/2480/4.) The announcement of the appointment of Lawson as ambassador to Israel was issued in April, but he took up office only on 12 November 1954.
3. See Nos. 196 and 223.
4. On Byroade's speeches – See No. 198 and n. 1; on Trudeau's visit – No. 213.
5. No. 242.
6. Herzog suggested stressing to the heads of the Administration that Byroade's comment was liable to sow despair and depression in the hearts of millions of Jews behind the Iron Curtain, and that by his lack of caution Byroade had harmed the substantial efforts being invested by various American institutions in order to awaken hopes of salvation among different circles in the Soviet bloc. (See J. Herzog to Shiloah, 18 May 1954, 130.02/2480/4.)

244. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 11 June 1954

Coded Tel. 544; Outg.: 130.09/2310/6

Summary

The government's proposals are as follows:[1]

a) Since two incompatible plans have been proposed, the Main Plan could be put forward as an acceptable compromise, and this is the danger. Thus Israel must stand firm on the main points of its plan, viz., inclusion of the Litani River waters as a sine qua non for cooperation.

b) The invitation to put forward development programs was to serve as an enticement to Israel to sell water in exchange for other benefits, and in this too there is a danger. This is another reason for insisting on the inclusion of the Litani River waters. Israel will then propose other plans, while it must be clear that these will not be considered as compensation for the loss of these waters but rather as an addition to Israel's irrigation plans, to the full extent of its rights.

It is clear that proposal (a) does not provide a solution to the issue of the Jordan and Yarmuk rivers as transnational waterways, an issue that could be solved on a give-and-take basis, but this problem need not be deals with in its entirety immediately. To the extent that this is now being considered as a general regional plan whose purpose is coordinated development, Israel will follow the above line as a means of pressure.[2]

Notes

1. This is the summary of the ministerial consultation held on 8 June, following Eban's report on his meeting with Johnston (See No. 232). The general opinion was that Johnston's willingness to discuss different development plans for the Middle East was bound up with the intention to compensate Israel with trivialities for its being discriminated against by a distribution of the region's waters favouring the Arab states. Therefore they asserted that Israel must insist on an overall regional program that included the waters of the Litani, even if this meant the thwarting of the regional settlement, and only against this background to begin exploratory discussions about a development plan such as an oil pipeline from Eilat to the Mediterranean, a railway from Sodom to Eilat, a Mediterranean-Dead Sea Canal, and so forth.

   Sharett did not consider this interpretation to be the only explanation of Johnston's proposal and envisaged the possibility that the United States would wish to enter into development projects in the Middle East, including Israel. He also did not accept the insistence on including the Litani River waters, which could lead to

the disintegration of the entire regional program, and ignored the interest Israel had in speeding up the settling of the refugees in the Yarmuk River basin and the upper Jordan Valley with the aid of the irrigation scheme. (See Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. II, pp. 535–536 [Hebrew].)

2. It was clear to Eban that the Main Plan was doomed to failure, either on account of Arab refusal or as a result of Israel's insistence on the inclusion of the waters of the Litani River. Under these circumstances he proposed helping Johnston by a compromise whereby there would not be agreement on the division of the waters as a whole, for a long period, but they would begin by implementing a small number of projects in Israel and in the neighbouring countries, without deciding the fate of the major questions and without beginning the Litani River project. (Eban's telegram to Sharett, WIA532, 13 June 1954, 93.01/2210/12.)

245. Y. Tekoah [Jerusalem] to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 11 June 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2439/8

Summary

Tekoah sends the exchange of correspondence between Bennike and Shalev concerning the Special Committee.[1] The first appeals raised on the agenda relate to the eviction of the Arabs of Azazmeh and Majdal, and the rulings of the Mixed Armistice Commission and of the Security Council were, as is well known, to return the people expelled to their homes.[2] Israel cannot expect to gain from the deliberations of the Committee, especially regarding the issues of freedom of passage through the Suez Canal and Egypt, as well as expulsions of Arabs. Thus Shalev's reply was formulated with the utmost care, and the main clause states that Israel presumes that no new issues would be discussed until the earlier issues were resolved. The Suez Canal issue is not specifically mentioned and can be discussed orally. The reply is formulated in a manner that will allow plenty of room to manoeuvre and even participation in sessions of the Committee if the need arises. Such a case could be if a proposal is put forward that the Committee deal in the first instance with procedure and not with issues that had been debated in the Security Council, such as the Suez Canal and the expulsion of Arabs.[3]

Notes

1. The Special Committee was intended according to the Israel-Egypt Armistice Agreement to serve as an instance of appeal for the resolutions of the Israel-Egypt Mixed Armistice Commission. In his letter, Bennike enumerated 19 appeals that

were pending on the Commission's agenda, and requested that a date be set for its convening. Shalev's reply took the form of the wording in the document before us. Prior to the exchange of letters, at a meeting on 12 April, Bennike reported to Shalev on his contacts with the Egyptians concerning the kidnapped Israeli soldier. (See No. 156 and n. 5.). As for the appeal they had lodged about this matter, the Egyptians had announced that they were not willing to discuss it until after the previous appeals lodged with the Committee had been dealt with, but they were prepared to meet continuously for as long as required in order to complete deliberations on all outstanding issues. Shalev maintained in reply that they must begin with the latest appeals, and there was no point in discussing the old ones. (See exchange of letters between Bennike and Shalev, 8 June, 21 May 1954, 130.16/2951/4; Shalev's report, 15 April 1954.)

2. This refers to the deportation to Sinai in 1950 of Bedouin of the Azazmeh tribe who lived in the sands between Auja al-Hafir and Rafah, and the evacuation to the Gaza Strip at the same time of Arab refugees who lived in Majdal (Ashkelon). These matters were discussed in the Armistice Commission, which ruled that the deportees must be returned, but (in June 1951) Israel lodged appeals to the Special Committee. (See Vol. 5, Nos 392, 394, and Editorial Note on pp. 218-219 of the Companion Volume, Vol. 6, No. 214 and n. 4.)
3. The special committee convened on 4 October 1954. After the Israeli proposal to discuss appeals lodged during the past year only had been rejected in the procedural stage of the meeting, the Israeli representative announced the withdrawal of the previous appeals Israel had lodged, including those relating to the Azazmeh and the Majdal Arabs. (See Shalev's report on the Commission's meeting, 4 Ocotber 1954, 130.02/2439/8.) See also No. 482 and n. 1.

246. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 12 June 1954

Coded Tel. 546; Outg.: 130.09/2310/6

Summary

Reacts to Eban's report on his meeting with Byroade.[1] His comments must be taken with caution. Even if correct, this is not a change in the United States policy. At the utmost, this is an indication of a reduction in the pace of arming the Arabs, but not a departure from it. He has realized that his speeches were hasty in that they were directed to long-term planning, and they were now endeavouring to placate Israel, without any real change. The same applies to Trudeau's statements which reveal the covert thinking of the Pentagon. The undertaking to examine Iraq's position regarding Israel prior to supplying it with arms is superficial. It is not reasonable to suppose that the Department of State was not aware of the meeting between Eban and Menderes, but it may well be that they were surprised not by the fact of the

meeting but rather by his statements about the attitude of the Arabs to the defence of the region. Menderes' scornful comment about Iraq's military prowess stems from American briefing. Finally, Eban was right not to react to the proposal concerning the Three Power Declaration. If something positive were to arise, Israel would endeavour to exploit it for its own benefit, but the Americans must not be given any pretext that will enable them to claim that they had acted at Israel's request and thus fulfilled their obligation.[3]

Notes

1. No. 242.
2. No. 237.
3. See No. 248 and n. 2.

247. Y. Tekoah [Jerusalem] to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 14 June 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2428/6

Summary

Tekoah makes a number of comments regarding Israel's claims in the forthcoming talks with Johnston.[1]

1. The Cotton Plan: The main difficulty in this plan is the inclusion of the Litani River waters. Israel must maintain its demand regarding the exploitation of these waters and that they will not be restricted only to Lebanon, which has considerable reserves of its own. The objections to the inclusion of these river waters in the regional programs are both legal and political. The Americans argued that since the river flows entirely in Lebanon, its status, unlike that of the Jordan and the Yarmuk, is that of a national river. Lebanon considers the plan to divert it to Israel as an intrusion on its sovereignty. This argument can be countered with the contention that Lebanon in any case participates in the various regional programs, and that it would be proper that it contribute some of its water, especially as in these programs the exploitation of waters is not restricted to international waters, but also includes national rivers and sources. Furthermore, the exploitation of national river waters for the benefit of neighbouring states is an accepted practice in many countries, especially for the creation of hydroelectric power.

2. The Benot Yaaqov project and the connection to the Adassiyya project: It was clear that from a tactical viewpoint it would be best to separate the issue of the renewal of work in the Jordan River channel and the Adassiyya project. Information received recently from New York stating that Johnston has informed the United Nations secretary-general that he did not object to the renewal of work on the Benot Yaaqov project reinforces this consideration. He, Tekoah, was of the opinion that it would be best to continue to separate the two projects, even if Johnston does try to create a connection between them.

His proposal was to determine that Israel's aim in the talks would be to bring about a situation that would enable the renewal of work on the Benot Yaaqov project without interference and without making any commitment at this stage on the Adassiyya project. The creation of such a situation would be a real achievement that would ascertain Israel's place in determining the regional division of water sources. To this end, the American representatives must be convinced that it is essential to reach an agreement with Israel prior to beginning the Adassiyya project, and that it would be best not to prevent Israel renewing work on the Jordan River. These comments are based on the assumption that both Johnston and Israel consider his visit as a further, but not final, stage in the development of a regional water system, and while not causing the mission to fail, Israel was entitled to refrain from giving specific undertakings at this stage.[5]

Notes

1. See No. 232.
2. Gordon Clapp headed the Conciliation Commission's economic survey mission in 1949, which planned development programs for settling the refugees. See Vol. 4, No. 460, n. 4.
3. See No. 232, n. 4.
4. See No. 241.
5. In the margins of this document Sharett made some handwritten comments, among which, to paragraph 2 b: "Not worth using this argument". On the concluding and last part: "This is an assumption prior to the talks and not the aim of the talks." On the talks with Johnston in Israel see No. 258.

248. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 15 June 1954

Notes

1. See No. 246, paragraph 8. On June 13 *Ha'aretz* published a news report from a Washington source according to which the Americans had drawn up a plan for the renewal of the Three Power Declaration, which Turkey was also to be invited to sign. According to this plan, in any case that the U.N. personnel would decide that a particular state was guilty of violating the Armistice agreements, steps would be taken even to the extent of the suspension of the economic and military aid and immediate military intervention. Eban checked and discovered that this report originated from the Department of State and it was possible that even incidents of the size of the Qibya and Nahalin operations would serve as a pretext for intervention. On the other hand, from sources in the A.P. news agency it was reported that the main intention was to allay the grave concerns of Israel regarding the arming of Pakistan and Iraq, and perhaps Egypt in the future. (See Eban's telegrams W545-6, 14 June 1954, 93.01/2210/12.)
2. Sharett agreed with this suggestion. On the conversation with Byroade see No. 253.

249. Y. Tekoah [Jerusalem] to the Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 15 June 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2431/10

Summary

Met with the chief of staff and herewith a summary of his comments regarding the dismissal of Hutchison and Israel's return to the Mixed Armistice Commission.[1]

In the present situation where Jordan repudiates its commitments under the Armistice Agreement there is no point in returning to the Commission.

Israel's absence from the Commission is not particularly to its disadvantage. On the other hand, the desire of the Powers, the United Nations and Jordan for Israel to return should be exploited to attain Israel's aims, especially clauses VIII, XII and IV[2] of the Armistice Agreement. The chief of staff is of the opinion that Israel should not return to the Commission until these issues have been resolved and therefore he believes that Israel's return should not be conditional upon Hutchison's dismissal. He fears that the official reply to Israel's demand for Hutchison's dismissal would be that

this would be easier if Israel were to return to the Commission, and this would be difficult to refuse.

The chief of staff also pointed out that since the decision to leave the Commission would be taken by the government, and as he was expressing his opinion as chief of staff, he requested that the opinion of the minister of defence should also be sought.[3]

Notes

1. On Israel's intention to bring about the replacement of Hutchison, the chairman of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission, see No. 203. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs deliberations were held about the best ways of having him replaced. Tekoah met with the chief of staff in order to obtain the I.D.F.'s reaction to Eban's suggestion to address a direct (but not public) appeal to the U.N. secretary-general and the Department of State, whereby Israel would return to the Commission if a new chairman was appointed to it. Tekoah himself was against making an official appeal. Hutchison's contract was about to end and it was best to inform the U.N. of Israel's stand unofficially, in order to prevent the extension of the contract. Sharett summed up the discussion as follows: "1. It is clear to me that we must find an honourable way back to the Armistice Commission. 2. This is the gist of the government's view. 3. We must not return as long as Hutchison is chairman. 4. Every effort must be made to have him removed – at this stage it is best by an unofficial explanation, but a warning can be issued that if there is no other choice we shall have to demand his removal officially. 5. To brief Ambassador Eban accordingly." (See Eban to Rafael, WIA521, 10 June 1954, 93.01/2210/12; memorandum from Tekoah to the minister of foreign affairs and comments of the minister of foreign affairs in the margins of this memorandum, 13–14 June 1954, 130.02/2431/10.)

   In a conversation between Sharett and the American chargé d'affaires in Israel, Russell, Sharett brought up directly the question of the replacing of Hutchison. Russell tried to defend Hutchison but Sharett was adamant. Russell promised to convey Israel's position to his superiors. (See telegram from the United States Division to the Israel embassy in Washington, 20 June 1954, 130.09/2310/6.)
2. Paragraph 4 of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement forbids civilians from crossing the armistice lines or entering into the territory between the lines. (See Vol. 3, appendix 8, p. 714.)
3. In the end, Eytan gave instructions to draw the attention of Hammarskjöld, the U.N. secretary-general, and Murphy (the deputy undersecretary of state for political affairs) to the fact that Hutchison's contract was about to expire in July, and to express the assumption that the contract would not be renewed. Eban was also authorized to hint that if Hutchison continued in office, Israel would be obliged to demand his removal, and to reply if asked, that in any event Israel would not return to the Armistice Commission as long as Hutchison was the chairman. (See telegram TNWA463, 17 June 1956, 130.09/2312/8.)

250. J. Proskauer [Washington] to A. Eban (Washington). 16 June 1954

Notes

1. Prior to these talks, Proskauer met with Byroade and gathered from the conversation that, from the reports of the political and military U.S. representatives in Israel, the following impression emerged in Washington: 1. In Israel there exists a moderate leadership interested in calming the atmosphere and in building up the country. Sharett represents this tendency. 2. There are other elements who favour occupying territory at Jordan's expense; these elements are found mainly in the Ministry of Defence. 3. The chief of staff does not accept the authority of the prime minister, but does everything that Ben-Gurion tells him. 4. The prime minister is troubled and concerned by the extremist tendencies in the public and the army. (See personal telegram from Eban to Sharett, WIA 562, 16 June 1954, 93.01/2211/11.)
2. See No. 198, and n. 1.
3. See No. 253.
4. The memorandum and draft proposal for the United States declaration concerning Israel were not traced.
5. See No. 282 and n. 1, and No. 290.

251. A. Eban (Washington) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 16 June 1954

Copy: 130.20/2467/7

Summary

Eban refers to the matter of purchase of arms from the United States on a reimbursable arrangement within the framework of the Mutual Security Act. The majority of the Israeli requests (14 out of 19) have been approved, and deliberations on another 4 are continuing. One request has been rejected. The cost of the equipment approved is $4,200,000. From January 1953 until 1 May 1954, no Israeli request has been rejected. Most of the items purchased were spare parts for American equipment held by the Israel Defence Forces. In contrast to the Israeli success, the Arabs have taken little advantage of the American market.

Conclusions:

The extent of American willingness to meet Israel's arms requests does not warrant any relaxation of efforts to widen and develop ties in this area with United States. It may well be that Israel has been too cautious because of its lack of financial resources and mistrust. In his opinion, further requests

should be submitted, even if monies were not available, and this would naturally lead to a process of negotiations for financial aid for the purpose of purchasing equipment, once Israel's entitlement has been recognized in principle. This will also enable the strengthening of ties between the Israeli and American defence systems, similar to ties which the United States has developed for the strengthening of Israel's economy. At the same time, opposition to arming of the Arab states must be continued.

Note

1. The list is on file, but was not printed here. Lavon's reaction to this memorandum – see No. 292.

252. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 16 June 1954

Coded Tel. WIA560; Outg.: 93.01/2210/12

Summary

In a meeting Byroade had with Lehman, Javits and Celler he reported:

1. The amount of Grant-in-Aid would be determined by economic considerations. To the extent that some political aspect was involved – they would tend towards an increase. The economic experts proposed twenty million but Stassen and Byroade had already agreed that the grant was not to fall below forty million.

2. The deliberations regarding the expansion of the 1950 declaration[1] were continuing. This referred to guarantees of the use of military force and sanctions in the event of seizure of territory and serious aggression from across the border. The aim, according to Byroade, was to re-assure Israel in the light of the concerns it had expressed.

3. The amount of arms supplied to Iraq would be minimal and the program would not be extended to include other countries. Byroade claimed that the program had been restricted as a result of Israel's protests.

Regarding point 2, Eban requests an immediate reply to his telegram on this matter. He also insists that the United States consult with Israel over the formulation and that the political, legal and international consequences should be examined carefully. Full details on the talks with Proskauer would be sent after his report was received.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 248 and n. 1.
2. No. 250.

253. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the United States Division. 17 June 1954

Coded Tel. WIA567; Outg.: 93/01/2210/12

Summary

The ambassador and Shiloah met with Byroade at the Department of State. The ambassador put forward Israel's arguments against reduction of the Grant-in-Aid, explaining that economic considerations necessitated its continuation at the present level. Byroade replied that the considerations were purely economic and in their judgement this year a somewhat smaller sum would be sufficient. They were prepared to examine the matter with Israeli economists prior to implementation. He argued that the situation in Congress was unclear, and pressure was being brought to bear to give part of the grant in food surplus and loans. The Administration was fighting against this tendency. He added that if there were progress on the Jordan River project or other development projects they would make efforts to obtain finance, even if this required applying to Congress.

In the political part of the discussion, the ambassador strongly criticized Gardiner's statement in the Foreign Affairs Committee.[1] He stressed especially the repeated Department of State allegation about the danger of Israeli expansion and Gardiner's statement that the Arab fears were warranted. He condemned the fact that, upon being asked what was being demanded of the Arabs, Gardiner did not even hint at the necessity of peace. Byroade's reply was hesitant and he apologized for not having been present at that session and he promised that he would be more alert during the coming testimonies in the Congressional committees. He agreed that the American statements referring to Israeli expansion were exaggerated and should cease.

They also discussed the Three Power Declaration, and the ambassador expressed Israel's stand on this as he had cabled.[2] Byroade replied that in the meantime no serious deliberations had been held and he did not have any additional information. They would consult with Israel prior to taking action.

They also spoke about the airplanes, and that would be reported separately.[4]

Notes

1. In a testimony given before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives on 7 May, Gardiner clarified the Department of State's demands from Israel: payment of compensation to the refugees; further release of the blocked accounts of the Arab refugees; agreement with the U.N. on the allocation of the Jordan River waters; considering the possibility of the repatriation of more Arab refugees: a conciliatory attitude towards the Arabs; and reassuring the Arabs regarding intentions for further expansion. In this regard he maintained that there was justification for the Arab fears of the population growth in Israel as a result of immigration. In response to a question from Senator Javitz, as to the American demands of the Arabs, he replied that the Department of State wished that the Arab states would develop their economies, produce greater quantities of food and develop their natural resources, establish stable governments and set up a viable defence force in the region. (See report in *Ha'aretz*, 16 June 1954.)
2. In this telegram, Eban confirmed that he was due to discuss this matter with Byroade along the lines and in the manner he had suggested in the previous telegram – see No. 248 and n. 1. there.
3. See No. 242.
4. In reply to Eban's and Shiloah's question whether the Department of State would allow Israel to purchase the F-86 aircraft in Canada (see No. 242 and n. 6.) Byroade replied that the Department would not raise obstacles if a legal ways were to be found in negotiations between Israel and Canada to conclude the deal without this requiring an active political step on the part of the United States Government. (Ch. Herzog's telegram, No. 571, 17 June 1954, 130.09/2310.)

   On the same day, Comay met with the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Pearson and submitted an official request to purchase the aircraft. The minister replied that he he would have to consult with Washington. (See Comay to Lourie, 17 June 1954, 93.08/391/1.)

   On 26 June, Peres, the director-general of the Ministry of Defence, announced from New York that, regarding the matter of the F-86, there was no chance in Canada either since the Canadians could not give authorization on their own and the Americans were not prepared to participate in the Canadian authorization. (See his telegram to the Ministry of Defence, No. 104, 26 June 1954, 93.01/2182/5.)

254. A. Eban (Washington) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 17 June 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2403/9

Summary

Eban outlines some of the basic principles of Israel's stand on the proposal to renew the Three Power Declaration drawn up in 1950.[1] Up till now, Israel had not reacted to these proposals and it would be prudent to lift this restraint.

In actual fact, there are two separate proposals, differing in their significance and consequences:

1. Renewal of the 1950 Declaration without any undertaking to intervene by force against any change of borders by aggression:

In fact the powers have the authority, political as well as legal, to renew this Declaration, and Israel has no *locus standi* in this. This arises out of the abstract and noncommittal nature of the original declaration. It is doubtful whether Israel would derive any benefit from this renewal. In the light of Byroade's recent speeches and of border incidents, such a renewed declaration could even be interpreted as an effort to strengthen the security of the Arab states as well as providing authority for the arming of these countries.

2. Strengthening of the 1950 Declaration by a commitment of the Powers to prevent by armed force the violation of existing borders:

In his opinion, such a declaration should not be made public without the permission and agreement of Israel. The sending of any American military force to Israel, without the existence of a military pact between the two countries or without the authorization of the United Nations, would be interpreted as an act of aggression on the part of the United States. Thus if the United States were to raise such a proposal, it would have to be pointed out that the dispatch of such a force would be a breach of international law, unless carried out within the context of international guarantees. In Eban's opinion, Israel should not underestimate the implication of such a tie, though he doubts whether such a guarantee would be attainable.

Eban's conclusions are as follows:

The renewal of the Declaration is of no value and could possibly be harmful to Israel.

If it were to be suggested to Israel that this could mean the possibility of the use of force in the event of attacks on its borders, it should be explained that this could not just be a declaration but required an agreed military pact

between Israel and the parties making it. If the United States were prepared to discuss such a pact, and Eban is very doubtful that it would be, Israel should reply that it is prepared to enter into such negotiations at any time. This, in Eban's opinion, should be Israel's reaction to such proposals, and this should replace the policy of inaction followed by Israel up to now.[3]

Notes

1. On the proposal, as it was discussed with Russell in Jerusalem and with Byroade, see Nos. 219 and 242. In his conversation with Eban in Washington, Russell said that one of the aims of his visit was to put pressure on the Department of State to make an effort to allay Israel's security concerns by means of a guarantee of military aid within the framework of the Three Power Declaration, if it was attacked. Eban warned that reconfirmation of the declaration was liable actually to be interpreted as reassuring the Arabs, and that it would only augment Israel's suspiciousness if it were interpreted as relaxing the restrictions on arming the Arab states. One could compensate up for supplying arms to the Arabs with scraps of paper for Israel. (See Eban's telegram to the United States Division, WIA525, 10 June 1954, 93.01/2210/12.)
2. See No. 237.
3. Concerning this paragraph, Rafael commented in his handwriting: "1. A military pact assumes granting the right of stationing army and installations, in peacetime, of the ally on the soil of the ally that it undertook to defend. 2. The new declaration should include a demand for territorial integrity and action to deter indirect aggression. (See the copy in File 130.02/2403/9). For a consultation on this matter on 5 July 1954 in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs see file 130.02/2403/9.

255. Ch. Herzog [Washington] to B. Givli (I.D.F.). 17 June 1954

Copy: 130.20/2480/4

Summary

Herzog refers to Givli's letter concerning Israel's policy of arms purchase.[1] In his opinion, despite all the problems in relations between Israel and the United States, there is still no alternative to the United States as the source of military aid. French assistance is important, but in the long run, Western solidarity is stronger than the interest of the French to aid Israel. In fact, the Americans were involved in every purchase Israel made outside the United States. He had no illusions about the direction of American policy during the past two years. They were determined to arm Iraq and Egypt. Despite this, they must not despair of purchasing arms from the United States, especially

within the framework of reimbursable aid. Israel in any case finances its purchase of arms in other countries, including France, and why, then, should it not buy them from the United States, exploiting the fluid political situation there.[3]

Notes

1. Givli's letter was not traced.
2. The military air base in Dahahran was built by the United States at the end of the Second World War. It was leased to it for 5 years, in summer 1951. The leasing contract was renewed in 1957, but in 1962 the base was officially handed over to Saudi Arabia, with the United States retaining the right to use it.
3. See No. 253.

256. Aide-Mémoire from the Government of the United States to the Government of Israel. 19 June 1954

Notes

1. The memorandum was presented to Sharett by the chargé d'affaires of the United States embassy, Russell, on 20 June, in the Prime Minister's office in Jerusalem. It was Russell's first visit to the minister of foreign affairs in Jerusalem. Russell said that the list of suggestions had been compiled in the Department of State on the basis of recommendations from United States, British and French representatives in the Middle East. A similar memorandum was also presented in Jerusalem to Eytan by the British ambassador. The French ambassador announced support for the proposals in a conversation with Eytan which took place on 22 June, but expressed reservations over the wording, and this explained the fact that they had not presented a written paper.

   In the conversation, Russell said that the proposals had already been submitted in Jordan. And in fact on 22 May the British ambassador in Amman submitted the proposals to the Jordanian government, and the American ambassador announced that his country would join in with the British step. On 13 June, the Jordanian government stated that it agreed to proposals 1, 4 and 8, but rejected proposals 9 and 10. They did not react to the remaining proposals, explaining that they were under the U.N. jurisdiction. (See the British memorandum, 19 June 1954, 130.02/2431/10; telegram from the United States Division to the Washington embassy, 20 June 1954, 130.09/2310/6; Eytan's report on the conversation with Evans, 130.02/2412/29, and report on the conversation with Gilbert, 130.10/2540/1; exchange of telegrams and memoranda in the British Foreign Office files, PRO, FO371/111071, 111072.) See also No. 257.
2. For Israel's reply, see Nos. 261, 267, 302.

257. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 19 June 1954

Notes

1. See No. 256. The Trieste method meant negotiations conducted by the Western Powers with each of the sides separately, with the aim of finding points of agreement between the different positions. See No. 208, n. 4.
2. This refers to the ongoing debate in the Security Council over Israel's complaints about violation of the Armistice Agreement by Jordan, and Lebanon's complaint on behalf of Jordan against Israel – see Nos. 153, 202 (Editorial Note) and 229.
3. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs they agreed to a symbolic one-day debate on condition of an assurance that there was not the slightest chance of a resolution condemning Israel for the Nahalin operation. As for the 11 Points, they replied that the comments would be sent after Johnston had ended his visit to Israel. (See telegrams from Kidron to the M.F.A., W580, 19 June 1954, 93.01/2210/12; XA886 and XA887, 21 June 1954, 93.01/2182/1 and telegrams from Eytan to Eban, TNW263, 21 June 1954, 130.09/2339/1.) On the debate in the Security Council, see No. 263.

258. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 21 June 1954

Notes

1. Eric Johnston, the United States President's special representative to the Middle East, arrived in Israel on 18 June for a second visit to the Middle East, to conduct negotiations on the regional water plan. His talks in Israel were preceded by four days of discussions in Cairo with the Arab Water Commission, composed of the representatives of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. (On these discussions see *FRUS 1952–54*, Vol. IX (part 1) No. 834, and report of February 1955 in File 130.02/3688/11). The meeting reported here, which took place on 20 June, was the first official meeting held in Israel. Participating were the ministers, the directors-general of the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, senior officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and water and agriculture experts. Johnston's delegation also appeared in full strength. (For a detailed report of the conversation see File 130.02/3694/7.)
2. The second official meeting took place with the same composition on 21 June, in Tel Aviv. A detailed report on the deliberations in File 93.04/41/12. See also No. 264 and notes.

259. J. Tsur (Paris) to M. Sharett. 21 June 1954

Coded Tel. 653; Inc.; 130.09/2345/4

Summary

Tsur refers to Sharett's telegram No. 849.[1] During the past few months he has been warning about the critical situation of the Jews of North Africa.[2] During the past two months he has written and cabled the Ministry stressing the renewed danger to the Jewish community as well as the lack of coordination and lack of action on the part of Israel. Thus it is incorrect to state that he has become aware of the emergency situation only as a consequence of the visit of Shragai and his proposals. He disagrees with these proposals as they place a heavy burden on the State of Israel without helping it. Such a proposal would bring only the impoverished and handicapped elements among the Jews of Tunisia to Israel, and this would not help in solving the problem of Tunisian Jewry as a whole. His own proposals are directed at preventing a policy of catastrophic solutions of this type, the main one being the establishment without delay of an authority, the appointment of suitable personnel, and a centralized budget.[4]

Notes

1. In this telegram, Sharett referred to the warning given by Shragai, the head of the Jewish Agency's Immigration Department, on the danger that the Jews of southern Tunisia would soon be liable to be facing, particularly because of the stormy emotions, economic ruin and daily threatening letters. He asked for an explanation why this situation had only come to the knowledge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the occasion of Shragai's arrival in Tunisia. (The telegram, dated 21 June 1954, in File 130.09/2345/6.) Shragai, who had been sent by the Coordination Institute in order to examine the possibilities of bringing to Israel, in a planned manner, about ten thousand Tunisian Jewish living in rural communities, reported from Tunis on pressure on the part of Jewish organizations for the immediate evacuation of the Jews of southern Tunisia because of the mortal danger they were in, and on account of the advice of the local authorities to evacuate the Jews immediately, since in the event of trouble they could not render them assistance. Shragai himself decided, after visiting the area, to evacuate two villages on the Libyan border, with about 200 Jewish residents, and requested that the 400 Jews be evacuated from anothe three villages. (See telegram from the embassy in Paris to the Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency, 18 June 1954, 130.09/2345/4.)
2. In 1954, the violent clashes in Morocco intensified as part of the struggle for independence from the French domination. In Tunisia also, acts of terror and the violent clashes continued, although these gradually died down as a result of the gradual transition to self-government. In letters to Sharett and to the director of the

West European Division, Tsur proposed a plan for coordinating and centralizing the action for helping the Jews of Morocco and Tunisia and organizing their immigration, which was being jeopardized by the fragmentation and the competition between the Jewish Agency, the Israel government and other bodies. He warned that if Israel did not immediately take steps to take control of the operation another organization would do so, and he recommended that the government declare North Africa an emergency region and stressed the need for unifying the activities as a temporary measure. (See letters to Sharett, 31 January 1954, 27 December 1953, 130.02/2388/13.); to the director of the West European Division, 19 February 1954, 5 March 1954, 130.10/2520/8.)

3. At the end of January, Tsur reported on the plan of Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress, to set up an Action Committee for North Africa, and his promise, after their conversation, to shelve this plan for the moment. On 20 June, Tsur again warned of the World Jewish Congress's attempt to take control of the operation in North Africa and asked Sharett to warn Goldmann against setting up any mechanism for dealing with North Africa as long as no unified plan of operation had been drawn up and the requisite mechanism had not been instituted by Israel. (See Tsur to Sharett, 31 January 1954, 130.02/2388/13; Tsur's telegram to Sharett, No. 64, 20 June 1954, 130.09/2345/4.)
4. On June 20, Sharett cabled Tsur that the Coordination Institute of the government and the Jewish Agency on problems of immigration, which Sharett headed, had adopted in principle the resolution to set up a coordinating committee in Paris and on the dispatching of coordinators to Morocco and Tunisia, but the Jewish Agency had requested that the implementation be delayed until after a further discussion in its executive.

   In reply to the telegram quoted here, Sharett explained that although Tsur had warned about organizational chaos, he had not said anything about an imminent collapse, which the leaders of the community in Tunisia were now claiming, and under whose pressure Shragai was calling for immediate emigration, and therefore his question was still valid. As for the demand to appoint a responsible coordinator in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, such a person had been appointed some time ago – this was Najar, the director of the West European Division. (See his telegrams 844, 20 June 1954 and 862, 25 June 1954, both in 130.09/2345/6.) See also No. 262.

260. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 23 June 1954

Coded Tel 656; Inc.: 130.09/2345/4

Summary

He reports that the French Foreign Ministry had submitted a draft Note concerning the purchase of Mystère aircrafts, stressing that they intended to stand by their commitment. The vague wording was to enable them to

counter any protest by England and the United States.[1] The disadvantage of this draft was its vagueness, and it refers to 24 airplanes and not 30 as Israel requested. Despite this, he recommends accepting it and bringing the deal to a rapid conclusion. His reasons: if Israel does not agree immediately, the matter would be raised again among the higher echelons of the French Foreign Ministry; it is difficult to gauge the reaction of Mendès France, the new foreign minister;[2] and there are rumours of changes among senior personnel in the French Foreign Ministry.[3]

Notes

1. On the negotiations concerning the purchase of the Mystère 2 jet fighters see No. 215. The wording of the French draft Note was the result of talks held in Paris by the military attaché and the head of the Israeli procurement delegation with Maillard, the deputy head of the Africa and Levant Department in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This was after de Courcelle, the director of the department, had expressed reservations about the agreement that had been signed at the beginning of May in Israel for the supply of 30 Mystère fighters and 6 transport planes. Agreement at this stage was to approve only 6 Mystère planes for fear of the reactions of France's allies. (See Tsur to the director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 5 July 1954, 130.10/2522/21; J. Tsur, *Paris Diary*, pp. 77–78 [Hebrew]; M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. II, p. 480 [Hebrew].)
2. In a consultation that Tsur had held in the embassy on 22 June, they estimated that the foreign policy of Mendes France, the prime minister and foreign minister since 18 June, would be more independent and less open to the pressures of the United States and Britain. (See J. Tsur, *Paris Diary*, pp. 75–76 [Hebrew].)
3. In the Ministry of Defence there were those who shared Tsur's opinion regarding the new regime. The minister of defence instructed the Director-General Shimon Peres, who was in Paris, to try and improve the proposal contained in the draft Note, but without causing a crisis in the negotiation. (See telegram from the West European Division to the embassy in Paris, No. 864, 25 June 1954, 130.09/2345/6; Tsur to the director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 5 July 1954, 130.10/2522/21.) The final agreement on the purchase of the Mystère jet fighters and the Nord transport planes was signed in Paris on 10 July 1954. (The text in File 130.02/2522/21.)

261. Resumé of a Consultation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem, 24 June 1954)

Copy: 130.02/2384/14

Summary

The consultation was called to discuss a memorandum submitted by the Powers on the Border situation;[1] participating were the minister of foreign affairs and senior personnel.

The minister of foreign affairs opened by outlining the issue:

1. The memorandum makes no mention of methods of prevention, but rather refers to action to be taken after events, except for paragraph 9, which refers to the marking of borders.

2. Paragraphs 1 and 2 constitute deviations from the Armistice Agreement and there is no option of implementing them unless the agreement is changed.

Israel can react in three ways:

1. To object to the document and declare its rejection.

2. To accept the document.

3. Not object and not accept it, just leave the matter open for discussion and clarification.

In his opinion, following possibility No. 3 would be sensible, as it would reveal serious consideration and be in keeping with the pressure Israel is exerting for negotiations with the Arabs. The reaction of the Arabs is of importance, especially as it would seem that they would not give a completely negative reply.

Comments by other participants:

The director-general is in favour of a positive approach, stressing those paragraphs that are acceptable. He pointed out the lack of preventive measures in the document. He proposed presenting a demand for free passage to Mt. Scopus in exchange for free passage from Gaza to Hebron.

G. Rafael proposed taking a matter of fact approach to the document and to reject it outright. The Powers were aiming to increase their involvement in the region. The Powers should be told that their proposals are not relevant to reducing tension and in Israel's opinion these issues could be solved by direct negotiations within the framework of the Armistice Commission. He also referred to the attitude of the Arabs. They agreed to those paragraphs that did not affect them and resolutely rejected those paragraphs dealing with the marking of the borders and the transfer of refugees from the Gaza Strip.

Sh. Rosenne and L. Cohen supported giving a positive reply in principle, while pointing out those matters that require amendment.

Levavi believes that there is no alternative to entering into negotiations. He stressed the need to replace the head of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, the appointment of a deputy and replacement of the chairmen of the Armistice Commissions.

The minister of foreign affairs summed up as follows:

1. The document must be replied to.

2. The reply should be in writing.

He proposed that it open with a general introduction and then relate to each paragraph individually. It should state that Israel is doubtful whether the proposals, apart from one or two, will be helpful. It should point out that the document does not mention ways of preventing incidents and ignores radical proposals already made, and serves as a cover for the inefficiency of the large numbers of officials and observers.

A committee was set up to formulate the reply.[4]

Notes

1. No. 256 and n. 1. there.
2. On 20 June, the day on which the memorandum was delivered in Israel, the *Jerusalem Post*, printed a report on the delivery of the document in Jordan. According to the newspaper, the first section of the document concerned important changes in the personnel of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization: the replacement of General Bennike and the appointment of British Observers "who were familiar with the problems of the region". The report about the intention to appoint British observers aroused hostile reactions in Israel.
3. See No. 257 and n. 1.
4. Details of the consultation with the Army representatives were not traced. On the lines of the reply that were adopted in the government – see No. 267. A full text of the remarks of the participants in File 130.02/2431/11.

262. J. Tsur (Paris) to M. Sharett. 27 June 1954

Coded Tel. 83; Inc.: 130.09/2345/4

Summary

Reply to Sharett's telegram No. 862.[1]

In his letter to Divon he had summarized the latest information on the situation in North Africa.[2] On the basis of indirect reports on the situation in Tunisia, it was his feeling that the Jews of Tunisia were far from considering

mass immigration to Israel. At the most, the affluent Jews of the community would seek ways to settle in France and would leave it to Israel to take care of the weaker and handicapped elements. Political tension there has not yet become critical and he is of the opinion that it is precisely in Tunisia that France would make a stand. Therefore he proposes to refrain from making drastic changes in immigration policy concerning Tunisia. Possibly an experiment should be made with a small number of immigrants to see what happens. As regards general activities in North Africa, he reiterates his proposal to appoint an official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Prime Minister's Office to coordinate and direct immigration policy, training and education in North Africa.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 259 and n. 4.
2. Tsur reported that in a meeting with the delegation of Moroccan Jews fears had been expressed concerning the fate of the Jewish community there, whether France tightened its hold in Morocco or whether Morocco would progress towards independence; and this in spite of the efforts of the Istiklal people to develop contacts with the heads of the community and to assure them of their friendly feelings towards them. However, there was no large-scale immigration from this country; at the very most the leadership was prepared to assist the impoverished elements to immigrate to Israel, but they themselves were not prepared to immigrate. Consequently there was no basis for the declarations in Israel concerning the organizing of mass immigration. Nevertheless the groundwork had to be laid to prepare for immigration when the time came. The situation in Tunisia was similar, and even worse, from several points of view. Tsur viewed with concern Shragai's effort to pave the way for an unorganized and disorderly flow of immigration from Tunisia. He warned that they were not properly prepared to cope with such a grave situation and thus were exposed to useless initiatives such as the attempt to set up a council for North African Affairs with the participation of the World Jewish Congress, the Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Jewish Agency. He called on the Israeli government to declare an emergency in North Africa and to activate the Jewish Agency, even though the veto on the operation and the emissaries would be retained by the government, and to appoint an official with authority on behalf of the government and the Jewish Agency in each of the countries of North Africa, to coordinate the budget and the supervision over the emissaries in that country. In addition to this, a special official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Prime Minister's office should be appointed who would be directly responsible for North African affairs. (The letter, dated 25 June 1954, in File 130.10/2520/8.)
3. This refers to remarks made by Wormser, a member of the central committee of the Alliance, at the inaugural meeting of the Council for North African Affairs, who called upon them not to encourage the immigration of the Moroccan and Tunisian Jews, and certainly not the Algerian Jews, who were Frenchmen from all points of view, and whose French allegiance had to preserved at all costs. (See ibid.)

4. Sharett read Tsur's letter at a session of the Coordination Institute on 28 June. It was agreed that there was no foundation for the statements about evacuating all the Tunisian Jews; it was decided to empower Shragai to bring over another 400 people, as he had requested, with an easing of the selection conditions, and to conduct a survey on the state of the Jews in the southern Tunisian villages, which would determine future plans for immigration. (See Divon to Tsur, 29 June 1954, 93.02/164/4.)

Tsur and Shragai met in Paris on 29 June and reached agreement on the general line to be taken for organizing the immigration. Shragai also accepted that the principle that rescue immigration should be applied only to a few villages in Tunisia and Morocco. Shragai reported to Sharett that in Morocco over 6,000 people had registered for immigration, half from Casablanca, and the flow was continuing apace, and in the months July–September 2,000 people would immigrate. (Telegrams to Sharett, from Tsur No. 681, and from Shragai No. 679, 29 June 1954, 130.09/2345/4.)

In a further letter dated 15 July, Tsur warned that although the decision to begin the immigration from the southern villages in Tunisia was essentially correct, they must take into account that once one village started to move, a mass movement could be expected. (Letter to Sharett, 130.09/2520/9.)

263. M. Kidron (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 29 June 1954

Coded Tel. XA912; Outg.: 93.01/2182/1

Summary

Kidron summarizes developments relating to the convening of the Security Council.[1] The Israeli delegation had requested this in writing. As a consequence of the letter, a session was held on 28 and 29 June with the participation of the delegations of the United States, Britain, and France. They admitted that Israel had the right to demand the convening of the Security Council, but requested that it be postponed because of the apprehension that a stormy session of the Council would impede efforts to implement the 11-point plan submitted recently to the parties. They held high hopes of this initiative and the Jordanian reaction to the document was much better than expected. The Israeli delegation maintained its demand, but stated that it would consult with its government.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 257.
2. The letter, dated 25 June 1954, in File 130.02/2405/4.

3. In a further telegram, Kidron asked for the Ministry's guidance on whether to exercise Israel's right now, recognized by the three Western Powers, to convene the Council or to wait for a more suitable opportunity, and added that the delegation, including Eban, recommended postponing the debate for the moment. The Ministry agreed to refrain for the moment from the demand to convene the Council since the Powers were not interested in it and Israel's initiative was doomed to failure. (See Kidron's telegram, XA913, 29 June 1954, 93.01/2182/1; Rafael to the Israel mission to the U.N., TNWA478, 30 June 1954, 130.09/2339/1.)

264. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to the Israel Minister in Washington. 29 June 1954

Copy: 130.02/3694/7

Summary

Reports on his meetings with Johnston and his assistants in Israel. Following upon the two meetings that caused only dissatisfaction and ended in an impasse,[1] Kollek and Herzog met with Johnston for a private conversation. Johnston asserted his friendly attitude towards Israel, his connections with the president and the implications for Israel-United States relations if the negotiations failed. They replied that Israel wanted peace and development of the region and stressed that the issue of water was for Israel a matter of life and death. They focussed on two points: Lake Tiberias as a reservoir for waters from the Yarmuk River and the allocation of water. They explained the sensitivity of public opinion in Israel regarding any type of international control of Lake Tiberias. As regards quantity, they explained that there is a certain minimum below which they could not agree to. Johnston replied that in the light of this sensitivity of Lake Tiberias he was prepared to yield on that issue. Regarding quantities, in his opinion Israel required an amount of 200 million cubic meters of "new waters" – that is water from the rivers in addition to the amount of water already being used for irrigation. Thus, why could they not compromise and agree to receive 100 million?

At a meeting held after this conversation, with the participation of Prime Minister Eshkol and Teddy Kollek, the Americans raised a new proposal according to which the initial allocation would be as follows: Israel – 260, Jordan – 240, Syria – 132, and Lebanon – 35. The amounts allocated to Syria and lebanon would be final. Israel proposed reducing the allocation to Syria and insisted that the water deriving from draining of Lake Hula should come within Israel's portion. At this stage, a heated discussion arose over the formula of allocation of the remaining water. The Americans insisted on the

formula "beneficial use within the water basin" and explained that the purpose of this formula was only to serve as a criterion for the allocation and would not prevent the use of water in any place that Israel wished.

A further obstacle arose at a later meeting when the Americans explained that the amount of 260 million cubic metres proposed for Israel included Israel's "present use," i.e., that the amount of new water allocated to Israel would be 130 million. The Israeli delegates strongly objected. The American's reply was confused and in the end they agreed to a deduction from the total of the amount of 60 to 70 million cubic metres of the water flowing into the Jordan River from the fishponds.

Following these meetings, the Israeli government held a special session. The main question was whether to discontinue the negotiations and if so in what manner. After a sharp and stormy debate, authorization was given to re-examine the situation with the Americans. They were to insist that the water deriving from the draining of the Hula would be received by Israel in addition to any calculation and to categorically reject the American formula for the final allocation.[2]

The joint meeting held after this began in a tense atmosphere, but in the course of time Johnston mentioned the number 400 million as the initial allocation to Israel. After further clarification, it became apparent that the amount of water already in use in Israel – about 130 million – would be deducted from this allocation and that the water draining into the Jordan River from the fish ponds would also be deducted. This would mean that only about 70–80 million would be deducted from the total allocation.

At the final meeting, Johnston reiterated his feelings of friendship towards Israel and expressed his hope that an agreeable arrangement would be reached. He stressed the importance of coming to an arrangement with the Arabs, and stated that Israel's future depended on its integration into the region and basing its economy not only on agriculture but also on industry.

Notes

1. On the first meeting see No. 258 and n. 1. Reports on additional meetings with Johnston and his people see note 3 below, and in telegram IW581, 24 June 1954, 130/09/2310/6.)
2. At a government meeting held on 23 June, Sharett summed up the state of affairs thus: the only regional plan that Israel was prepared to discuss was the Cotton Plan, which included the Litani River waters. Since the Lebanese refused to discuss it, a regional plan was not possible. Israel also did not agree to the final division of the waters as Johnston had proposed, since such a division could only be undertaken in the context of a regional plan. On the other hand, there was nothing to prevent Israel, in the meantime, from carrying out the projects that both sides had agreed to:

the Benot Yaaqov project and the Adassiyya project. The United States was also interested in the Adassiyya project, mainly for the purpose of settling the refugees – a goal that Israel was also interested in; since the project entailed the exploitation of the Yarmuk River water, which Israel had claims on, and since the dam was planned to be constructed in the Demilitarized Zone which was Israeli territory, Israel's agreement was required for its construction. This situation enabled Israel to obtain certain advantages. The points of contention between Israel and the United States at this stage were three: 1. The amount of water to be set aside for these projects; 2. Did Israel have to agree in advance to a principle determining the final division of the water – the principle that the Americans had proposed was the division according to the efficient utilization of the water for irrigating the land in the drainage basin of the Jordan and Yarmuk Rivers. 3. The use of Lake Tiberias as a reservoir for the Yarmuk water that were not diverted to a southward-directed channel for immediate use – and which raised the question of international supervision.

In the ensuing debate, fears were expressed regarding the intentions of the United States to supervise the division of the waters in order to obtain a foothold in the region. Sharett said that an effort must be made not to widen the breach and to arrive at some partial arrangement. He proposed not compromising over the principle of the final division of the water, and on the other hand not to reject in advance and in principle the flow of the remaining Yarmuk River waters into Lake Tiberias, since the international supervision would only be that which Israel agreed to. As to the desire of the United States to gain a foothold in the region, Sharett did not rule out this argument, but said that the American interest was not at odds with Israel's, and this was to prevent a conflict in the region which would embroil it, and to assist in resolving the problem of the refugees by settling them in Jordan with the help of the water project. (See stenographic report of the government meeting, 23 June 1954.)

3. At the meetings held on 24 and 25 June, Israel was represented by Kollek, Sapir, Herzog, Blass and Wiener. After a further effort to reach agreement on the formula for the division of the remaining water in the final allocation, the debate centred on the amounts of water to be allocated to the sides in the initial stage. (See telegrams from the United States Division to the embassy in Washington, IW584, 25 June 1954; IW594, 28 June 1954, both filed under 130.09/2310/6.)
4. For these figures see "Tentative Allocations", 28 June 1964 in File 130.02/3688/11.
5. Compare with Sharett's summing up of the discussions with Johnston in No. 280.

265. A. Eshel (Vienna) to W. Eytan. 29 June 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2411/10

Summary

Eshel reports on Israel-Austria relations and the status of the Israeli consulate.[1] The Austrians had hoped that the opening of the Israeli consulate

would be the first step in the establishment of normal relations. Their hopes were not fulfilled and in the meantime relations had cooled. There was a feeling within the Austrian Foreign Ministry that Israel was not particularly interested in developing relations. There is a danger that at a suitable time they would reduce the status of their mission in Israel from consulate-general to consulate. They might also try to reduce the activity of the Israeli consulate. The attempt to change the consulate to a "Representation Politique" had been rejected by the Austrians because of their relations with Russia. In his opinion the solution was to raise the status of the consulate to that of consulate-general. This would not be a basic solution but would constitute a gesture that would not be costly to Israel. Requests comments.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 236.
2. One section, dealing with the importance of the Israeli consulate in Vienna, is not printed here.
3. After consultation, Shek informed Eshel about Sharett's principle position, the main thrust of which was that they must not at this moment change the representation in Austria before the results of the reparations negotiations became known. None of the explanations proffered by Eshel were likely to be supported by the government or by Israeli public opinion. This did not mean that hard and fast rules had been laid down on this matter that were irrevocable, and the Ministry would discuss the matter again once the results of the negotiations were known. (See Shek to Eshel, 4 July 1954, 130.02/2411/10.)

   The Austrian government and the Committee of Jewish Organizations reached an agreement in July 1955, and at the beginning of August 1955 the consulate in Vienna was raised to the status of consulate-general. In February 1956 the representations were raised to the status of legations.

266. H. Berger (Jerusalem) to M. Sharett. 29 June 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2410/2

Summary

The Knesset Committee for Foreign Affairs and Defence devoted four sessions to the matter of the arrests and trials of Zionist activists in Romania.[1] The following proposals were made with the request that they be passed on to the government:

1. To instruct Israeli officials in Bucharest and other capitals to bring this matter to the attention of the Romanian government and its diplomatic legations.

2. To express to the Romanian government Israel's willingness to receive the accused persons and the Jews under arrest.

3. To continue efforts to resume immigration to Israel, especially the immigration of those with relatives in Israel.

4. To encourage, under the supervision of the government, the activities of Jewish organizations which could help to resume immigration and obtain the release of the prisoners.

Note

1. See No. 227 and n. 1.

267. Minister of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 30 June 1954

Coded Tel. 599; Outg.: 130.09/2310/6

Summary

The minister cables the outline of the reply to the Powers' Aide Mémoire as approved by the government.[1] It was decided to delay the reply since Jordan, which had received the Aide Mémoire before Israel, had not yet replied. Following is the proposed reply:

1. Israel welcomes the concern of the Powers to reduce the tension.

2. States that the Armistice Agreement is the basis for security arrangements and Israel is prepared to fulfil it in full.

3. The rejection by Jordan of specific undertakings, such as Articles VIII and XII, and its refusal to agree to peaceful solutions abrogates this basis.

4. Israel is not convinced that the situation can be rectified while the basic undertaking to abide by the Armistice Agreement is not kept and there is no willingness for cooperation.

5. A number of the proposals in the Aide Mémoire would require amendments to the Armistice Agreement, and to this end the agreement of both parties would be required.

6. Israel is surprised at the tendency in the main part of the proposals to turn the United Nations headquarters and its staff into an independent body with powers of implementation. Israel claims that the only role of the U.N.

representatives is that which both parties have agreed upon within the terms of the Armistice Agreement.

7. Israel will single out those items that it will accept in principle, although not as formulated, such as items 9 and 10. It will also detail its agreement to the marking of the border, by agreement, and not by the observers as they see fit. It will reject the idea of providing permission for free passage of refugees from Gaza to Jordan, but it is prepared to aid the passage of refugees from Gaza to Jordan for permanent residence.

8. It will be pointed out that the majority of the proposals are not preventative, but rather reactions to events. The importance of preventative measures must be stressed, such as the transfer of refugee camps from the border to the interior.

9. In conclusion, the principal aspect of the matter will be stressed and that is the obligation of Jordan to implement the basic aspects of the Armistice Agreement. Israel's readiness, as before, to meet for negotiations will be emphasized.[2]

Notes

1. In a government debate on 27 June on the responses to the 11-point proposal (see No. 261) Sharett indicated two problems in the proposed points: that they required changes in the Armistice Agreements and that they displayed a clear tendency to expand the authority of the U.N. personnel and to turn it from a mediating body into a body acting on its own initiative. Dayan compared the role they were proposing to grant to the U.N. personnel in these points to a sort of border master, similar to the water master in the Johnston plan. Lavon said that this was an attempt to lay the foundations for a High Commission in Israel. In his concluding remarks, Sharett stressed the need to preserve sovereignty, but warned of a fierce argument with the great Powers, whom Israel frequently needed in its appeals to them and the Security Council. (See stenographic report of the government meeting, 27 June 1954.)
2. The text of the Israeli reply to the Powers – see No. 302.

268. E. Elath (London) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 1 July 1954[1]

Coded Tel. 780; Outg.: 93.04/40/14

Summary

Elath met with Selwyn Lloyd. At first he referred to the forthcoming agreement between Britain and Egypt. He asked whether in the light of the agreement it would not be appropriate to discuss the issues that had been

brought up during the course of the visit of British officers two years ago, and to renew contacts on these matters.[3] Lloyd replied that a discussion of this nature was dependent upon a calmer atmosphere prevailing along the borders in the Middle East. Once there is progress in this area, then there might be a possibility of holding discussions as proposed by Elath. He hoped that Israel would agree to the practical proposals that had been submitted to it.[4] He recommended that Israel return to the Armistice Commission, improve its relations with the United Nations administration and renew the Local Commanders' Agreement. These were small, technical steps but they were of the utmost importance. He also mentioned Israel's request to renew deliberations in the Security Council. He said that in order to reduce the tension it would be best to refrain from holding such deliberations in the Council. They led nowhere and only hampered quiet diplomacy.

He moved on to discuss the situation in the Middle East in general. He stated that there had been an improvement. The Arabs are as divided as ever. The Pakistan-Turkey Pact had caused a split among the Arabs; Egypt was annoyed with Iraq because it feared that it would join the Pact. The present government in Jordan was satisfactory, and Britain was using its influence to encourage it to pursue a moderate policy. The future of Egypt was dependent on the agreement with Britain, without which it could not survive. Britain was about to introduce changes into the proposed agreement with Egypt that would help to allay Israel's fear. In any event, they would insist that any agreement would include a reaffirmation of the principle of free passage for shipping.

Finally, Selwyn Lloyd issued a warning to Israel. It should be clear to Israel and its government, he stated, that in the event of an Israeli attack on Jordan the Anglo-Jordan agreement would be implemented. It would be dreadful if such a war were to break out, but he was obliged to make this clear. Elath replied that Israel sought peace.[7]

Notes

1. The conversation took place on 30 June. The telegram dra brofted the same day, but was sent the next day and received in Israel on 3 July.
2. On 25–29 June, Churchill and Eisenhower held talks in Washington, with the participation of Dulles and Eden. The talks dealt with current global questions. On 28 June, at a news conference, Churchill answered questions concerning the Middle East and said that they had to promote just Zionist aspirations and to help the Arabs to achieve their national goals. He opened with the words: "I am a Zionist," expressing admiration at the rebirth of Israel, and stressing the importance of peace. He also stressed his great affection for the Arabs and recalled that he had Abdallah crowned king in Jordan.

3. This refers to a British military mission which visited Israel at the beginning of October 1952 for talks about the possibility of including Israel in the defence network of the Middle East. The Israeli representatives made practical suggestions for military and strategic cooperation, but although Israel again raised the subject with British representatives there was no follow-up to this.(See Vol. 7, Companion Volume, Introduction, pp. xiv–xv.)
4. See No. 256.
5. See No. 299 and n. 1.
6. See No. 263.
7. Sharett's directive in reaction to this – see No. 278.

269. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to M. Kidron (New York). 1 July 1954

Coded Tel. TNWA479; Outg.: 130.09/2339/1

Summary

Eytan instructs Kidron to bring to the notice of the United Nations secretary-general the incidents during the previous day and night in Jerusalem,[1] stressing the seriousness of these attacks, which were not preceded by any provocation. He is to submit a protest to the Security Council.[2] In the meantime no specific demand should be made to the secretary-general. Eytan also informs Kidron that the minister had agreed to Israel's participation in the emergency meeting of the Mixed Armistice Commission on condition that Bennike serve as chairman.[3]

Notes

1. On 30 June, at around 20:30, shots were fired in the central section of the demarcation line separating East and West Jerusalem. The shots escalated into heavy and numerous exchanges of rifle and mortar fire along the entire line, which continued until 1:30 in the morning of 1 July, when the U. N.-brokered cease-fire came into effect. The exchanges of fire resumed that same afternoon and continued at intervals until 21:45. The exchange of fire resumed on the morning of 2 July and then an Israeli soldier was killed on Mount Zion. The firing continued at intervals throughout the day until a cease-fire was arranged at midnight, but on 3 July a few isolated shots were fired until a total cease-fire was arranged during the afternoon.
2. On the talks that were held according to this instruction with the secretary-general of the U.N. and in the foreign ministries in Washington, London, and Paris, see No. 270 and n. 1. The protest letter to the Security Council – see No. 271.

3. The last sentence is according to a correction sent by Eytan, at the time Bennike was meeting with Sharett (telegram TNWA481, 1 July 1954, 130.09/2339/1). And in fact at that meeting, on 1 July at 12:45, Sharett acceded to Bennike's request concerning Israel's participation in a special session of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission headed by him. This was the first time that an Israeli delegation took part in the Commission's discussions since its withdrawal after the adoption of the resolution on Ma'ale Aqrabim. The session, which began on the same day at 17:00, ended with the agreement of the parties to an unconditional cease-fire, but this was subsequently violated. (See report of the Head of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization to the U.N. secretary-general, 1 August 1954, U.N. document S/3278.)

270. M. Kidron (New York) to W. Eytan. 1 July 1954

Coded Tel XA922; Outg.: 93.01/2182/1

Summary

Kidron had met with the secretary-general to discuss the incident in Jerusalem.[1] He argued that the Jordanians had acted without restraint after successfully confronting the United Nations forces. They believed that they had complete control of the Armistice Commission and thus allowed themselves to engage in aggression. The secretary-general agreed that such an atmosphere existed in Jordan, but asked what were the immediate causes of the incident in Jerusalem. It may be necessary to convene the Security Council to consider this incident. He would discuss the matter with the three Powers and inform Kidron of his decision. He said that he would make Israel's letter and Jordan's telegram public. He also said that he had received a report from Bennike on the incidents which was slightly different from the reports from Israel and Jordan.[5] He was pleased that Israel had agreed to participate in the sessions of the Armistice Commission. At the end of the meeting, Kidron told the secretary-general about the incident on Lake Tiberias[6] and said that this reflected the atmosphere of the anarchy that existed there.

Notes

1. See No. 269 and n. 1. On the same day the Israeli representatives, in accordance with the same instructions, visited the foreign ministries in Washington and London, and the next day – also in Paris. In a conversation with Elath in London, Shuckburgh expressed his regret at the events, especially in light of the optimism expressed by Selwyn Lloyd in a conversation the previous day (see No. 268), and

said that they would appeal to both sides with a demand to stop the firing. (See Elath to Eytan, telegram 784, 1 July 1954, 130.09/2320/2.)

2. On 1 July at 13:30, Sharett issued a statement at a news conference. He asserted that the incident in Jerusalem was an act of aggression initiated by Jordan, and all the indications were that it had been officially sanctioned, without any provocation on Israel's part. He noted that over the past many weeks Arab Legion soldiers had been hurling stones and sniping from the wall into Israeli Jerusalem. The I.D.F. soldiers on duty had acted with restraint, but had finally reacted. The cease-fire that had been arranged was also violated within a short time, sniping was resumed and had caused casualties.

   The U.N. mission received instructions to incorporate these matters in the text of the protest it would present to the Security Council. (See telegram from Tekoah, TNW484, 1 July 1954, 130.09/2339/1.)

3. On the night of June 27-28, an I.D.F.unit attacked an Arab Legion camp in Azzun, 13 kilometres east of Qalqilya. The unit killed three Jordanian soldiers and wounded others. A wounded Israeli soldier was left in the field and was taken prisoner. The attack came in response to the killing of an Israeli farmer in Ra'anana on 27 June, by infiltrators who came apparently from the village of Azzun. On 30 June the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission condemned Israel, in its absence, for a grave violation of the Armistice Agreement. (See telegrams from Tekoah to the embassy in London, No. 938, 28 June 1954, 130.09/2319/4; 962, 1 July 1954, 93.04/39/21; Benny Morris, *Israel's Border Wars 1949-1956*, pp. 306–308.)
4. See No. 263.
5. See No. 271.
6. On the morning of 30 June there were exchanges of fire between an Israeli police boat patrolling opposite the northeastern shore of Lake Tiberias and a Syrian position in Kursi. Two of the policemen in the boat were killed and five wounded. The following day, 1 July, two Israeli boats patrolling at the same spot on Lake Tiberias again came under fire. In the course of the incident Israeli artillery returned fire from the shore at the Syrian position. The Israel-Syria Armistice Commission, which discussed the incident in two sessions, on 19 and 30 July, condemned both sides for the exchanges of fire. Israel was also condemned for the presence of two armoured and cannon-equipped vessels in the Defence Zone of Lake Tiberias.

271. M. Kidron [New York] to the President of the Security Council. 1 July 1954

Note

1. The letter was also handed to the U.N. secretary-general on 2 July and circulated as a U.N. document, S/3259. Following this, on 2 July, Kidron submitted an additional letter to the Council president (U.N. Document S/3260) detailing further attacks in Jerusalem, on 1 and 2 July. (See in File 130.03/2014/3.). The secretary-general's reply, see No. 276.

272. Editorial Note

Government Meeting to Discuss the Events in Jerusalem

On July 2, the government convened to discuss the events in Jerusalem. Chief of Staff Dayan gave details of the chain of military events. He said that the Arab Legion had opened fire; the I.D.F. had taken charge of security in the city only after several hours; the firepower and weaponry that the I.D.F. used corresponded to those used by the Jordanians. He noted that the minister of defence had issued instructions not to use artillery, and to avoid as far as possible firing in the direction of the holy sites. He added that he had given orders the previous evening to fortify the line with barbed wire and mines. The government had approved this step.

Lavon gave a political and military survey and noted that after a certain period of quiet along the armistice line with Jordan, the situation had changed two weeks ago, with the killing of the three members of Mevo'ot Betar who had crossed the line into Jordan. Two days later there was a murder in Ra'anana, deep in Israeli territory. Israel had reacted with an operation in Azzun. Lavon did not discount the possibility that the events in Jerusalem had come in reaction to the Azzun operation. He suggested, but only in the event of the incidents continuing for days and life in the city being unbearable, to attack the Arab Legion in Jerusalem. Sharett did not doubt that the events in Jerusalem came as a reaction of the Arab Legion to the Azzun raid, and complained that the I.D.F. operation in Azzun, to which he had given his approval, had gone well beyond what he had initially been told. Sharett said that the improvement of the situation on the border, as the chief of staff had explained to him, was the result of the Legion having set up positions along the line, which enabled it to keep rioting bands in check to a certain extent. But the other aspect of this deployment, he added, was that every strike by Israel led to a serious Jordanian military response. The deliberations concluded with the resolution that every operation conducted against Jordan would first be brought for approval before the Ministerial Committee for Foreign and Defence Affairs and if possible – the government. (See stenographic report of the government meeting, 2 July 1954.)

273. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington.[1] 2 July 1954

Coded Tel. TNWA485; Outg.: 130.09/2312/8

Summary

The situation in Jerusalem was discussed at a meeting with the ambassadors of the three Powers. The British ambassador, Evans, pulled from his pocket a note with a description of the incidents he had received from Jordanian sources, which put the blame on Israel. None of the three queried the facts as presented by Israel.

The meeting was informed of the intention of the consular corps in Jerusalem to meet and express its protest at the attacks on holy places. Eytan stated that Israel seriously objected to this initiative. It was possible that one or two buildings had been damaged, but such a protest would create the impression that it was Israel that had attacked the holy places. Such a step would lead to severance of relations between the consuls in Jerusalem and all government bodies. All three participants agreed that such a step would be unwise and informed their consuls by telephone accordingly.[2]

Notes

1. Also sent to London and Paris.
2. In another telegram Eytan stated that it had been agreed that at the meeting of the consuls the American consul would declare that it was not their job to intervene in a matter under U.N. jurisdiction, and that he would not take part in any decision without the express instruction of his government. Eytan assumed that the British consul would follow suit. The French consul was warned by Gilbert not to be a party to any decisions taken by the consular corps. (See telegram from Eytan to the embassy in Washington, TNWA487, 2 July 1954, 130.09/2312/8.)

   The consuls' meeting opened with an announcement by the doyen of the consuls, the Greek consul, who reported that according to Biran, in charge of the Jerusalem district in the Ministry of the Interior and the liaison with the consuls on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there was no truth in the rumours alleging that shells had landed near the holy sites, and Israel would continue to scrupulously protect the security of those places. Afterwards the American consul announced that he could not take part in any political decision since he had not received instructions from Washington. The attitude adopted by the consuls in the discussion was positive and easygoing. During the meeting details of damage to holy sites in the Old City were given, including a shell that had fallen about 50 metres from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and had wounded two women. In the end it was decided that the doyen of the consular corps would visit Biran and inform him that the consuls

viewed positively Israel's announcement concerning the safeguarding of the holy places, and were satisfied with this. A similar visit to Biran's opposite number in the Old City would also take place. (See Biran to Eytan, 5 July 1954, 130.02/2408/6.) See also No. 275.

274. Aide Mémoire from the U.S. Embassy in Israel (Tel Aviv) to the Government of Israel. 2 July 1954

Note

1. The American ambassador in Jordan passed the message on to the Jordanian prime minister on 3 July. The latter declared that Jordan was not interested in shooting on the borders and least of all in Jerusalem; that it was inconceivable that Jordan had initiated the incidents, since the commanders of the Jordanian Army were British officers. However, in order to allay any doubt, he summoned Glubb and instructed him to avoid any provocation and to ensure that the cease-fire was scrupulously observed. (See *FRUS 1952–54*, Vol. IX, (part 1), No. 840.)

275. Meeting: Israel Prime Minister – The British Ambassador (Jerusalem, 2 July 1954)

Notes

1. The conversation was held at 15:00 in the prime minister's residence in the presence of Arthur Lourie, who wrote the report.
2. See No. 273.
3. See Editorial Note, No. 272.
4. This refers to the telephone conversation that Sharett had with the British ambassador, Evans, on 1 July at 21:30. During the conversation, Sharett expressed extremely grave concern about the situation in Jerusalem that was liable to get completely out of hand. Although far-reaching restraint was called for in view of the sacred character of Jerusalem, Israel's patience was liable to run out since it could not compromise the security of its citizens. It appeared that General Bennike and the observer apparatus as a whole were not capable of helping, and he asked for the intervention of the ambassador via the British ambassador in Amman, to ensure that the cease-fire would be observed. The cease-fire had earlier been set for 18:30, but had been violated by the Jordanians. Evans replied that he did not have direct contact with Amman, but afterwards he phoned Sharett and informed him that he had made radio contact with Amman and had conveyed an urgent demand, but had received a contrary version. Sharett repeated Israel's version of the events, namely, that the cease-fire had been kept unilaterally by Israel, for a long time, until it had been compelled to return fire. (See transcript of the phone conversation, 1 July 1954, 130.02/2431/11; Evans' telegram to the British Foreign Office, 1 July 1954, PRO, FO371/111182.)

276. D. Hammarskjöld (New York) to M. Kidron (New York). 2 July 1954

Note

1. See No. 271.

277. A. Lourie (Jerusalem) to E. Elath (London). 4 July 1954

Coded Tel. 981; Outg.: 130.09/2312/8

Summary

Lurie cables to Elath, with copies to Tsur in Paris and Shiloah in Washington. The British military attaché, Roper, had met with him the day before and told him that he had information that the Jordanians were afraid of an attack by Israel. He requested restraint and patience on the part of Israel. Lourie had passed on the message to the minister of foreign affairs and the chief of the general staff. The minister was furious by the very thought that there might be an attack by Israel.[1] Lourie informed Roper accordingly.

Notes

1. From a more detailed record of this conversation it emerged that Sharett was angry with the British for contacting Israel instead of the Jordanians. According to that record Roper was convinced that the Jordanian government was not behind the shooting, and that the Jordanians sincerely believed that Israel was going to attack at some stage. (See Lourie's record of the conversation, 4 July 1954, 130.02/2431/11.)

   On 3 July, Biran received an alarmed phone call from the British consul-general who said that in the Old City there was general panic because of the fear of an Israeli attack. Biran replied that this fear was entirely without foundation. The next morning the consul informed Biran that his statement had also been forwarded to the Jordanian defence minister, Anwar Nussaibah, and had calmed the situation. (See Biran to the director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 5 July 1954, 130.02/2408/6.)

   On 4 July, at a United States Independence Day party, the American military attaché also spoke to Lourie about this same matter, and said that he had investigated and himself found out that there were indeed troop movements to Jerusalem and these movements were causing apprehension and concern. On the

same day the spokesman of the Israel U.N. mission in New York issued a denial of the claims that Israel was preparing to seize Arab Jerusalem by force. (See Arad to Lourie, 5 July 1954, 93.08/357/44.)

2. See Nos. 273, 275.
3. See No. 263.

278. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in London. 4 July 1954

Coded Tel. 979; Outg.: 130.09/2320/1

Summary

Sharett reacted to the comments of Selwyn Lloyd as reported in telegram No. 780.[1]

Israel had stated that it was prepared to return to the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission as soon as Hutchison was dismissed. In Sharett's opinion there is nothing to prevent his dismissal, since he is only the acting chairman and a permanent chairman could be appointed without dismissing him from the staff of the United Nations headquarters.

The 11-point plan proposed to Israel to redress the situation on the borders was of interest, but he did not see any possibility of an improvement on the basis of an agreement that was consistently violated by the other party.

Israel did not believe that the supply of Western arms to the Arab League would cause the disruption of the united Arab front against Israel.

Israel had heard with great interest that the agreement with Egypt would include reaffirmation of the right of free passage in the Suez Canal, but was waiting to see how this would be implemented and whether Britain would also demand the free passage of oil. Israel had also learned with satisfaction that only a few military installations would be transferred to Egypt.

On the other hand, Israel was astonished at and regreted the renewed warning against aggression issued against it. The talk of aggression on the part of Israel is absolutely groundless. The British should be told that they should stop issuing warnings against Israel and bring their influence to bear on Jordan to fulfil its undertakings in the Armistice Agreement.[3]

Notes

1. No. 268.
2. See No 269.
3. Avner replied that he would present Sharett's position to the British Foreign Office

as forcefully as possible, but the source for the repeated warnings was the information received from the British Embassy in Israel, from tourists returning from Israel, and from letters to *The Times*, according to which there existed in Israel a "strong hand" school of thought headed by Ben-Gurion, Dayan and Lavon, and which had considerable public support. This group favoured a preventive war on the basis of the assumption that the Jordan River was the only defensible border and that time was on the side of the Arabs. The feeling in the British Foreign Office was not that the I.D.F. was likely to act contrary to the government's wishes, but that the leaders of this school and the pressure of pubic opinion were liable to bring the government, by democratic means, to act in line with their thinking. (See Avner to Lourie, 8 July 1954, 93.04/40/14.) Sharett's reply – see No. 289.

279. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 6 July 1954

Stenciled circular : 93.08/357/1

Summary

He sends the wording of the statement of the Egyptian minister of national guidance, Salih Salim made during his visit to Beirut.[1] He requests that this statement be widely publicized and to arrange for reactions to appear in the press, questions to be raised in parliaments, approaches made to influential persons, etc. All these reactions should refer to the Egyptian minister's statement that after the evacuation of Suez the Egyptians would attack Israel. Warnings should be issued to the effect that if this is Egypt's intention, it should be restrained and not allowed freedom of action. This statement should also be exploited to obtain public support against the arming of Egypt. Demands should be made to delay the agreement until Egypt agrees to guarantee free passage through the Suez Canal.

Note

1. In answer to a question, Salim in Beirut made the following statement: "As for the problem of Palestine, that is a problem which can be solved only by force. That force will not be achieved until the Suez Canal is free. The Egyptian army is unable to fight as long as the British Army separates it from its bases. The United States and Britain are withholding arms from Egypt and are preventing Belgium from selling her arms. They know that with the freeing of our economic and military forces an end will be put to foreign occupation throughout the Middle East." (See memorandum of 13 July 1954, 93.04/41/5.)

280. Minister of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Ambassador and the Minister in Washington. 7 July 1954

Copy: 130.02/3694/6

Summary

Sharett sums up Johnston's visit to Israel.[1]

The Litani River – Johnston does not oppose in principle inclusion of the waters of the Litani in plans for the allocation of waters, but in practice did not take them into account. He argued that in any case Israel would not require them in the foreseeable future, and saw no reason to insist when Lebanon refuses outright to even to discuss the matter. Israel had the alternative either to withdraw from the negotiations for this reason or to enter into negotiations, stressing that for the time being it would be prepared to relinquish these waters. However, in this case, Israel was not prepared to accept the final allocation of waters from the other two rivers, which could be to its detriment without those of the Litani.

Thus, the final allocation of the waters became the main bone of contention in the discussions. At first Johnston endeavoured to impose the allocation according to the Main Plan, claiming that this would be a concession on the part of the Arabs since Israel would be able to use these waters anywhere it wished, and not only in the river basins, as provided by the Main Plan. Israel countered that the concession was not a real one, as from the outset it did not intend to accept the principle of using the waters in the river basins only.

In the second phase of the negotiations, Johnston distinguished between two different terms: the formula by which the waters would be allocated and the principle that would determine their use. By the second phase he was prepared to accept Israel's stand, while with regard to the first phase he was obliged to accept the demands of the Arabs. This would mean that the allocation of the waters would be made on the basis of the size of the area irrigated within the basin, but once the allocations had been made each country could use the waters as it deemed fit, even outside the basin area. Such a distinction would not be to Israel's advantage.

In order to assuage its objection to the final allocation of the waters, Israel proposed a discussion of joint water projects to be become effective immediately, and that would exploit only part of the general allocation of the waters. It reasoned that if this plan were implemented peacefully and in cooperation, it would be easier to arrive at an agreement in the future for the inclusion of the waters of the Litani River. Thus, the amount of waters for

allocation would be larger. Johnston and his assistants rejected this proposal and demanded that a final solution be reached immediately.While they did not accept the Arab's demand that the allocation of waters be final, they wished to determine the principle of allocation. No principle would be acceptable to the Arabs except attachment to the basin and allocation of waters according to the area of land within it.

Despite this, the Israeli pressure did have some success and practical projects for immediate implementation were discussed. Israel proposed practical plans for irrigation in the Jordan Valley, and during the course of the negotiations the number of projects increased as well as the amount of water to be included. In the end, an initial allocation of 1,020 million cubic metres was allocated and only some 55 million remained for future allocation.

Following Johnston's last visit to Cairo, a joint communiqué was issued by him and the Arabs he had met with.[2] Among other things, it referred to the principle of "effective use" as the basis for the allocation of waters between the parties. Israel requested clarification, as it feared that there might be a contradiction between the principle and the initial allocation that had been agreed upon. A reply has not yet been received.[3] Another unexplained point in this statement was the section about the agreement reached between Johnston and the Arabs regarding the necessity for an international authority to supervise implementation of the arrangement. Israel had repeatedly expressed its objection to this proposal and at the most had agreed to the appointment of a neutral body, a "water master", which would ensure that the waters were allocated according to the agreement. In the meantime the matter remains unclear.

The issue of international supervision was also bound up with the plan in which the Lake Tiberias would act as a reservoir for the river waters, including the Yarmuk River. This idea required the imposition of foreign supervision of the lake. Since Israel feared any form of infringement of its sovereignty, it proposed that in the first stage which did not require the diversion of the Yarmuk River waters to Lake Tiberias, it would not make use of the lake. Johnston, surprisingly, was extremely pressing on this issue, and it was only after considerable efforts by the Israeli delegation that he reconsidered.

Sharett sums up by stating that what the United States wished to achieve by its intervention in the water issue was:

(1) The provision of aid in the economic development of the region and the raising of the standard of living as a protection against the penetration of communism;

(2) The prevention of conflicts in the future that could involve the United States;

(3) The advancement of a solution to the refugee problem.

Above all was the desire to obtain an enduring status of predominance on matters in the Middle East.

Notes

1. See No. 264 and n. 1.
2. At the end of the talks Johnston held in Cairo on 24-25 June with the Arab Water Committee, a joint communiqué was issued. In the communiqué it was stated that the regional plan was designed to develop the entire region; that its main aim was the settlement of the Arab refugees without violating their rights; that the distribution of the waters would be according to the principle of their potential efficient utilization within the collection basin of the Jordan; that the waters of the Yarmuk River would be collected in a reservoir in the river and also in Lake Tiberias; and it would be necessary to agree to an international supervisory authority to supervise the distribution of the waters. In the end it was stated that differences of opinion still existed on certain important issues, and additional meetings would be required in order to resolve them so that the work on the project could begin. (See summary report of negotiations held in June 1954 between Johnston's group and the Technical Committee of the Arab League, February 1955, 130.02/3688/11.)
3. In a personal message sent via Russell, Johnston explained that that he had not reached any final agreement with the representatives of the Arab governments; that his talks in Cairo had in fact produced a number of understandings regarding the Arab stands on certain questions, but the discussions had not ended conclusively; that he held identical opinions regarding the Arab states and Israel; and that although significant progress had been made, there still remained several outstanding issues that needed to be resolved. As for the joint communiqué, he explained that he would try to the best of his ability to bridge the gap in positions between the Arabs and Israel and with full awareness of the positions adopted by the two sides. (See Russell to Sharett, 2 July 1954, 130.02/3688/12.) Sharett's reply – see No. 283.
4. At a press conference held on 22 June 1954, Sharett summed up the positions taken by the representatives of Israel and Johnston and his assistants at the talks. Israel, he said, maintained its view that only by the exploitation of the waters of the Litani River which were going to waste would it be possible to achieve a division of waters that would guarantee the full potential of irrigation; within the context of the distribution of the waters at a first stage, the Israeli representatives had reacted favourably to the plan to settle the Arab refugees in the Jordan Valley, within the framework of the Jordanian government's irrigation scheme, but considered the quantities of water allocated for this purpose to be excessive; they did not reject Johnston's approach that an agreed basis for the distribution of the waters of the basin should be determined now, but they did not accept the principle that the final division should be made according to the possibilities for the efficient utilization of the waters for irrigating the lands inside the basin. Regarding the question of the collecting of the Yarmuk River waters in the initial stages of the implementation of the plan, it was decided that this did not require the use of Lake Tiberias as a collecting reservoir, whereas the question of using it in the future remained open in the view of the Israeli government. The Israeli representatives also reacted

negatively to any international supervision over the water sources, and the United States delegation explained that what was intended was only a neutral mechanism whose function would be solely to watch over the volume of water supplied to each side. (See report to Israeli Missions Abroad, 29 June 1954, 130.02/3688/11.)

281. Sh. Kaddar (Prague) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 7 July 1954

Copy: 130.02/2414/3

Summary

Kaddar reacts to the directives of the director-general concerning relations with the People's Republic of China.[1] He will of course follow the director-general's directive to strengthen ties with the representative of China in Prague, but does not consider that this would help to solve the problem of relations with China. This issue is currently the criterion by which the Communist world regards other countries. The attitude of the Communist countries towards Israel will depend on its attitude towards China. However, the direction Israel is following in this respect is not consistent. Israel recognized China at an early stage, but during the Korean affair it followed the American line and found itself in an absurd situation whereby it recognized China but was taking a line inimical to it. In his opinion the time has come to establish normal relations with China. This would provide a strong basis for Israel in the Asian region. It could be presumed that China would establish a legation in Israel and would thus be the first Asian country to do so. The next step would be to support China's request for membership in the United Nations. This would be to Israel's advantage, because the representative of Formosa had always been hostile to Israel, and the status of the Security Council would be strengthened.[4]

Notes

1. No. 231.
2. See No. 218.
3. As a result of the talks Eden had held with Zhou En Lai at the Geneva Conference, Churchill announced on 17 June in Parliament China's agreement to send a chargé d'affaires to London. There had been a British chargé d'affaires in Peking since 1950.
4. Eytan fully agreed with Kaddar's analysis, but informed him of the vigorous opposition of the embassy in Washington to the establishing of relations with China. He explained that the China question stirred the feelings of American public opinion

and government circles there even more than the issue of the Soviet Union, and Israel had been advised that any forging of relations between it and China would deal a cruel blow to its standing in the United States.

Sharett also found himself concurring with Kaddar's reasoning, but gave as a first reason for rejection the impact of such a step on Israel-United States relations, and as a second reason, not to give American Jews an excuse to blame Israel that at the time that it was attempting to win their sympathy and active support, in contrast to their government's policy on vital issues, it was provoking that same government with regard to a far less vital matter. (See letters to Kaddar from Eytan, 20 July 1954, and from Sharett, 10 August 1954, 130.02/2414/3.)

At Eytan's request, Lewin sent a more detailed reply. He reported that after over six months of efforts, other Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials, and in the end the minister also, were now of the opinion that everything should be done to exchange representatives with China. The grounds for approval of such a step were China's standing in Asia, the fear that the Arabs would steal a march and be in Peking before Israel, in which case Israel would not find an attentive ear there, and the consideration that such an independent step would strengthen Israel's position vis-à-vis the United States. Adamantly opposed to this was the embassy in Washington which, among other things, feared for the fate of enterprises such as the U.J.A. The Chinese had put out some feelers with Israeli representatives in several places, regarding the establishment of relations, and in Rangoon the possibility of sending a commercial delegation had been explored. Israel had received a positive reply, but was still waiting for an official invitation from China. (See Lewin to Kaddar, 27 July 1954, 130.02/2414/3.)

282. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban and R. Shiloah (Washington). 9 July 1954

Coded Tel. 626; Outg.: 130.09/2310/7

Summary

A briefing on the forthcoming visit of the Israeli chief of the general staff to the United States:[1] This visit should be seen as a major opportunity for information about the Israel Defence Forces and its value, about the Arab states and their hostility towards Israel, the danger of providing them with arms, their negative attitude to democracy, and Israel's security problems. The chief of the general staff will on no account raise the issue of regional defence, but if asked, he should reply that Israel is interested in it and could participate, and that it constitutes the most reliable and loyal force in the region. Concerning the 11-point plan, he is to state that the government would reply to this,[2] but he can explain the background. The briefing also contains instructions regarding meetings with Jewish and non-Jewish public figures.

Notes

1. The initiative for the visit had come from the minister of defence already in February. Dayan wanted to visit the training installations in the United States. Sharett had been in two minds, but on the recommendation of the embassy in Washington had decided to approve. The letter of invitation was due to be delivered by General Trudeau during his visit to Israel, but he did not submit the letter and contented himself with questions about the proposed visit and evasive answers. As a result, it was decided in Israel to halt the arrangements for the visit, but after an official invitation was received from the Department of State, including a detailed itinerary of the visit, and it was stated that all the arrangements had been made with goodwill and with all the requisite ceremonial protocol, it was decided to implement the visit. (See correspondence in File 130.02/2456/6.). On the visit itself, see No. 290.
2. See No. 256 and notes.
3. In a statement to the press, given at the airport on his arrival on 12 July, Dayan said that he had come to visit the military installations as a guest of the American Armed Forces and expressed the hope that his visit would contribute to advancing the friendship between Israel and the United States. He added that this was the first official visit of an Israeli chief of staff to the United States. (The text of the statement was sent from the M.F.A. to New York for the chief of staff after he had left Israel, in telegram TNW495, 11 July 1954, 1/2339/130.09.) See also M. Dayan, *Story of My Life*, pp. 128–130 (Hebrew).

283. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to E. Johnston (Washington). 12 July 1954

Notes

1. See No. 280 and notes.
2. Compare the wording of the announcements published after Johnston had submitted to the president and the secretary of state a report of his visit to the Middle East, with the text published by the Department of State on 6 July (130.02/3694/6.) and the text that appeared in the Israeli press supplied by the U.P. and J.T.A. news agencies (*Ha'aretz*, 8 July 1954).

   In response, the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement on 8 July describing Johnston's statement as his personal summation issued without the prior knowledge of the Israeli government. The spokesman qualified this by stating that in the talks with Johnston an attempt had been made to explore the possibility of an agreed water settlement with the states concerned, but as long as no final agreement had been reached on all the main elements of the plan, no hard and fast conclusion should be reached with regard to Israel's agreement to any particular principle, apart from its general positive attitude to a regional water settlement. The Israeli government maintained its right to continue the work in the Jordan River channel, and Johnston himself also stated in his talks with the Israeli representatives

that he did not consider that he had the authority to intervene in this matter. (See *Ha'aretz,* 9 July 1954.)

3. Johnston's reply – see No. 324.

284. Minister of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Defence. 12 July 1954

Copy: CZA, A245/195

Summary

In reply to a memorandum of 2 July, the minister of foreign affairs states that he accepts the minister of defence's proposal to transfer contacts with the Armistice Commissions from the Ministry of Defence to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[1] Contacts with members of the commissions in the field will remain with the military. The function of supplying information for publication on deliberations in the commissions and guidance of the press will also be carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Because of the importance of the matter, he intends to bring it to the government for approval.[2]

Notes

1. In this memorandum Lavon informed Sharett that "I have come to the conclusion that we ought not continue further with the present situation which causes operational difficulties and constantly changing lines. I am not prepared to take responsibility for the activities of the Commissions under these conditions, and seeing that you are not prepared to rely on my responsibility it would be best for you to undertake the full responsibility as well as the handling of all the Commissions. Whatever line of action is followed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs representatives in the Commissions – at least it will be a uniform representation which derives from a single source of authority." Lavon added that it was obvious that the Army representatives would cease to act as heads of the Israeli delegations, but he would be prepared to assign to the delegations officers who were competent in technical functions. He suggested that the arrangement should come into effect on 1 August. (Lavon to the minister of foreign affairs, 12 July 1954, CZA, A245/195.) This memorandum was sent following a number of conversations between Sharett and Lavon, following criticism voiced by the I.D.F. spokesman on the bias displayed by the Mixed Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission, which also found expression in its failure to denounce Jordan as the aggressor during the debate on the shooting incidents in Jerusalem, and the warning to the effect that this failure was undermining the trust that Israel had in the U.N. personnel. The spokesman also confirmed a newspaper report that the U.N. secretary-general had instructed General

Bennike to abstain from voting on this issue. (See M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. II, p. 554 [Hebrew].)

2. The matter was not brought before the government. On July 13, Lavon and Sharett held a meeting after which Lavon announced that his proposal still stood, but that so long as the present situation prevailed he considered himself as fully responsible for instructions given to Israeli representatives. Sharett differed with this assertion, and stressed that where the issuing of political directives was concerned the prime minister was the final arbiter. He suggested a trial transition period, during which the military personnel would remain in the Commissions, but would receive instructions from him, the minister of foreign affairs and the prime minister. However, Lavon would not change his mind. (See exchange of letters between Sharett and Lavon, July 1954, CZA, A245/195; M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. II, pp. 555–556 [Hebrew].) See also No. 297.

285. G. Avner [London] to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 13 July 1954

Coded Tel. 805; Outg.: 93.04/40/14

Summary

Avner had been summoned by Selwyn Lloyd and was informed as follows:

Britain was about to renew negotiations with Egypt with the intention of finalizing them and as the agreement would affect Israel he wished to inform him of a number of points:

(1) The agreement would include the principle of free passage of shipping through the Suez Canal.

(2) Britain intended to leave small amounts of military equipment in Egypt, on the understanding that it would remain there for Egyptian use only in emergency situations in which case the British would return.

(3) At a certain stage, probably as near to possible toward the conclusion of the negotiations, the Powers would reaffirm the Three Power Declaration, with an undertaking to Israel that in the event of Arab aggression against it, the Western Powers would intervene in its favour

(4) Britain had no intention of abandoning Israel, did not intend to leave the Middle East and its presence would serve as a deterrent to any potential aggressor. They intended to be based on Cyprus and to bring considerable additional forces to Jordan.

This is the content of the British government's announcement.

Avner requested further clarification regarding free passage for shipping, along the lines of the minister's telegram, No. 797.[2] Lloyd avoided a direct

reply but stated that the principle would be given expression in the agreement and that this was not the time to bring unnecessary pressure to bear on Egypt. He was aware that Israel was in the right, but Egypt claims that it is in a state of war with Israel, and the Soviet Union supports it in the United Nations. Once the agreement with Egypt is implemented, they could act quietly to ensure the passage of oil. He explained that as regards the Three Power Declaration, they constantly endeavoured to maintain a balance of armaments and he was certain that the United States would do likewise. The Western Powers were required to take into consideration Arab oil, but American Jewry constituted a counterbalance to the asset of oil. There was no intention to abandon Israel and he was authorized to declare that under no circumstances would Arab aggression against Israel be tolerated, now or in the future, and that in such an event they would intervene actively. As regards the policy of arms purchase, Israel's technological supremacy would have to be taken into account, and thus there was no point in maintaining a numerical balance, matching plane for plane. There was great importance in maintaining quiet on the borders, and under the present circumstances there was no alternative to achieving this except by increasing the number of United Nations observers.

Avner said that he would pass on these clarifications to his government. In his opinion there was some sincerity in Selwyn Lloyd's statement, perhaps at the behest of the prime minister, but it was mainly to take the wind out of the sails of Israel (and of the Opposition in Britain). In his opinion, in the light of this meeting, Israel's Note on this issue should be reformulated.[5]

Notes

1. No. 268.
2. No. 278.
3. This telegram not found.
4. See No. 279 and n. 1.
5. In the telegram to Avner (No. 29, 16 July 1954, 130.09/2320/1) Sharett expressed indignation over some of the assertions and phrases used by Selwyn Lloyd in his remarks, and particularly the suggestion to rely on the Jews of the United States when he knew about Washington's plan to supply Egypt with a large quantity of arms after the signing of the agreement, and in light of the widening rift between Israel and the United States. He outlined several integrated lines of action aimed at reducing the amount of weapons supplied to the Arabs, to ensure that Israel received a compensatory supply of arms, and to obtain clear and absolute guarantees for the preservation of the Israel's territorial integrity: (a) to denounce the futility of the Three Power Declaration, (b) to warn against supplying arms so long as Egypt refused to make peace, (c) to demand arms for Israel simultaneously with the supply of arms to Egypt, (d) to demand Egypt's approval for the passage of oil cargoes to Israel through the Suez Canal. See also No. 376.

286. Z. Argaman (Bucharest) to the East European Division. 14 July 1954

Coded Tel. 195; Inc.: 130.09/2296/13

Summary

Argaman reports on his delivery of the Note to the Romanian deputy foreign minister.[1] At the meeting he added some points in keeping with his telegram No. 490.[2] The deputy minister replied that in his opinion the Note did not contain a reply in keeping with their request to halt the antagonism towards Romania, and as for the second point, immigration to Israel, their attitude was well known. He promised that the Israeli Note would be examined in detail. Further details by mail.[3]

Notes

1. The reference is to the Note replying to the Romanian Note from the beginning of June – see No. 238. In its reply the Israeli government had declared that no defamation campaign was being conducted in Israel against the government, the people, or the social and political regime in Romania. The claim of the Romanian government that over one hundred Jews who had been sentenced to lengthy prison terms had been found guilty of espionage was unacceptable to Israeli and world public opinion. The impression created was that the reason for the arrests was their support for the Zionist cause. The Israeli government could not deviate from the principle of freedom of expression current in Israel, and could not suppress a spontaneous popular manifestation of Jewish solidarity. The government once again expressed its aspiration for the establishment and development of normal relations with the Romanian government. It noted that the freeing of the sentenced Jews and their immigration to Israel would certainly contribute considerably towards advancing these relations, and appealed to the Romanian government to permit the emigration of the tens of thousands of Jews who had submitted emigration requests, and particularly of those who wished to be reunited with their families in Israel. (The wording of the Note in a telegram of the East European Division to the Israel legation in Bucharest, No. 231, 5 July 1954, 130.09/2296/12); Argaman's telegram to the East European Division, No. 194, (13 July 1954, 130.09/2296/13) reports on the submission of the Note to Cioroiu, the Romanian deputy minister of foreign affairs.
2. Argaman believed that the Romanian Note would make it possible to renew discussion of the matter of immigration to Israel, the reunification of families, and the anti-Zionist trials, and suggested points for a restrained but clear reply. (Telegram, dated 13 June 1954, in File 130.09/2306/6.)
3. Further details on the conversation, in Argaman's report dated 19 July 1954, 130.11/2509/1.

287. Editorial Note

Meetings of the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission over the Events in Jerusalem

The Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission discussed the events in Jerusalem at several meetings. In the last meeting, held on 15 July, the chairman, General Bennike, summed up the deliberations. He stated that after a careful examination and analysis of the evidence as presented by the sides he had come to the conclusion that the events in Jerusalem, which had begun on 30 June, had not been planned beforehand by any of the parties and were not the result of a planned attack. He recalled that for several days before the outbreak of the events, there had been repeated incidents of stone throwing by guards stationed on both sides. It was possible, he stated, that the firing had begun in reaction to such an incident, and had developed into an exchange of fire between the two sides, but because of the contradictory evidence, he was unable to determine who had fired the first shots. He suggested to the two sides that they retract their draft resolutions, which placed the blame on the opposing side, and instead to consider practical steps to prevent the recurrence of such events. Israel did not respond positively to this suggestion, and in the voting each side stood by its own resolution, the chairman abstained, and so the meeting ended without any resolutions. After the meeting, Israel issued a statement expressing its deep concern over the inability of the U.N. to apportion the responsibility for the beginning of the events. (See Tekoah's telegram to the Israel embassy in Paris, 16 July 1954, 130.09/2345/7; Statement by the Government of Israel, 17 July 1954, 130.02/2431/11; U.N. Press Release, 15 July 1954,130.16/2949/16.)

288. Israel Embassy in London to G. Rafael. 15 July 1954

Coded Tel. 808; Inc. 130.09/2320/2

Summary

At Rafael's request,[1] Gazit met with Tripp in order to clarify Jordan's reply to the West's proposals concerning tension on the border. In their reply the Jordanians differentiated between those matters whose execution was dependent upon the agreement of both parties and those that came under the exclusive authority of the United Nations. Following is the Jordanian reply:

As regards proposal No. 1 – positive; No. 2 – apparently positive; No. 3 – do not object; No. 4 – positive; No. 5 – this comes under United Nations' jurisdiction; No. 6 – concerning the free movement of United Nations observers, apparently positive; No. 7 – this is left to the United Nations; No. 8 – agree; Nos. 9 & 10 – object.

Tripp pointed out that the negative reply concerning the marking of the border makes their agreement as regards the other points worthless and he advises Israel to reply positively in this matter, and to stress this point.

From this discussion and others he has held, Gazit presumes that it would be to Israel's advantage for tactical reasons to take a positive stand as far as possible. At the same time, care should be taken in formulating the reply to stress that the Armistice Agreement should not be undermined and should be implemented in its totality.

Note

1. In the telegram, dated July 12 1954, Rafael asked Gazit to make special and urgent efforts to find out the contents of Jordan's reply to the 11-point Anglo-American proposal for easing the border tension. See No. 256. (The telegram in File 130.15/3745/3.)

289. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to G. Avner (London).[1] 15 July 1954

Orig.: 93.04/39/22

Summary

Sharett comments on a point in Avner's letter to Lourie of 8 July,[2] namely, the argument that in Israel there is a serious school of thought, politically and militarily, advocating a preventative war against the Arabs, as an initiative to be taken and as immediate practical policy. It is true that there is an assumption in Israel that time is not on its side as regards the balance of forces as compared to the Arabs. It is also generally accepted that the present border with Jordan is topographically and strategically artificial, but to deduce from these two assumptions that a school of thought exists in Israel which advocates this as immediate practical policy, and to depict Ben-Gurion, Lavon and Dayan as its leaders, is nothing but idle talk and gossip.

Notes

1. A copy of this letter was also sent to other Israeli missions – Paris, Ankara, Moscow, Ottawa, Stockholm, Rome, Belgrade and Prague (filed under 130.02/2399/1).
2. See No. 278 and notes 1 and 3.

290. Chief of the General Staff of the I.D.F. (Washington) to the Minister of Defence. 16 July 1954

Coded Tel. WIA677; outg.: 93.01/2210/14

Summary

Dayan reports on his discussions and meetings. He met with Trudeau and other generals.[1] Trudeau was most courteous. He met with Byroade (together with the ambassador and Shiloah).[2] Byroade expressed his viewpoint regarding the Middle East and the necessity for increased influence on the part of the United States, which in the long run would be to the benefit of Israel. He left no doubt as to the following points:

(1) Arms will be supplied to Israel only after the conflict with the Arabs would be resolved.

(2) Guarantees to Israel are not possible without taking parallel steps with the Arabs, and they will refuse.

(3) The Egyptians would receive some arms after the British evacuation and it was America's aim to assist them to regain their leadership status in the Arab world.

(4) A settlement of Israel's relations with the Egyptians would come about only after the British left. However, he did not believe that peace would be possible except through a constructive approach, for example the resettlement of refugees.

(5) He was concerned about border security and Israel's undermining of relations with the United Nations' administration.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 282.
2. On the conversation with Byroade compare *FRUS 1952-54*, Vol IX, (part 1), No. 842.
3. Paragraph (3) appears only in the wording of the incoming telegram (File 130.09/2310/11.). See also M. Dayan, *Story of My Life*, pp. 128–129 (Hebrew).

291. Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Minister of Defence. 18 July 1954

Copy: 43/3339/2

Summary

Sharett issues instructions in preparation for the deliberations in the Israel-Syria Armistice Commission scheduled for 19 July concerning the Lake Tiberias incident.[1] On no account are the Israeli representatives to leave the deliberations, even if the Syrians, as expected, again raise the issue of their rights in the lake, and even if the Chairman rules in their favour on this question of procedure.[2] By abandoning the Commission, Israel would not prevent the passage of a resolution against it, and could in fact make the passage of such a resolution easier. To this should be added the general argument of avoiding the impression abroad that Israel takes advantage of every opportunity to abandon and "sabotage" the normal working of the Armistice Commission.[3,4]

Notes

1. On 19 July, the Commission discussed the July 1 shooting incident on Lake Tiberias (see No. 270 and n. 6). The Commission had decided on the question of fishing rights on 15 March 1954 (see No. 110 and n. 2).
2. Sharett wrote these words after hearing from Tekoah that the chief of staff had issued such an order. (See M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. II, p. 556 [Hebrew].)
3. Israel withdrew from the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission on 23 March following the Commission's ruling on the Ma'ale Aqrabim incident. On 2 June the Israeli delegation left the meeting of the Israel-Syria Armistice Commission because the chairman had not prevented discussion of a Syrian complaint relating to the Demilitarized Zone, despite the fact that the delegation had insisted that the Commission was not authorized to discuss questions relating to the Demilitarized Zone. (See report of the meeting of 2 June 1954, 130.02/2434/5.)
4. See also No. 300.

292. P. Lavon (Tel Aviv) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 20 July 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2422/8

Summary

Lavon disagrees with the facts and conclusions in the report of Ambassador Eban concerning the purchase of arms and military equipment from the United States within the framework of reimbursable military aid.[1] It is not correct that the purchase of equipment in this manner is 10 percent cheaper than that offered on the open market. Often the prices are not at all lower than the open market at all. Furthermore, the terms of payment are onerous because they demand full payment in advance. Also, the situation regarding those items Israel has received permits for is not encouraging. Permits have been granted for minor items that do not constitute a significant contribution to the strengthening of the Israel Defence Forces, but for essential items this is dragged out, or the replies are negative.

The conclusions of the minister of defence are as follows:

1) It is not correct that there are signs of progress in the policy of the new administration towards the supply of arms.

2) Also, when they do supply equipment within this framework it is carried out by humiliating Israel by demanding details that are not convenient for Israel.

3) Other Western countries sell arms to Israel on more favourable conditions of credit and in larger quantities without demanding political and military conditions.

4) He is not calling for the cessation of arms purchase within this framework, especially if the conditions are favourable and if the Americans are prepared to sell more significant items.

In conclusion, he warns against self-delusion on the basis of so-called achievements that have no real foundation.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 251.
2. See No. 242, n. 6.
3. In another letter, the director of the minister of defence's bureau noted other items of arms that Israel had requested in the context of the reimbursable military aid which had not been approved and which had not been included in Eban's list, and also mentioned items of arms that Israel had received permits for in the years

1950–1952, outside the framework of the reimbursable military aid. (See Evron to the political secretary of the minister of foreign affairs, 25 July 1954, 130.02/2422/8.)

293. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 20 July 1954

Copy: 93.04/42/8

Summary

Eytan writes about relations between Israel and China. In May, the Ministerial Committee for Foreign Affairs and Defence decided to delay the final decision regarding relations with China until the end of the Geneva Conference.[1] In the meantime, the issue has become increasingly urgent and it is apparent that Israel's relations with the countries of Asia are dependent to a large extent on its relations with China. Recently Britain established full diplomatic relations with China, without raising too much indignation on the part of the United States. The argument that forging relations with China would weaken Israel's status in the United States is doubtful. Israel's relations with the Americans are in any case weakening continually, and the very act of showing its independence by forging ties with China could well strengthen Israel's status. Therefore, he requests that the minister raise the issue once again in the Ministerial Committee for Foreign Affairs and Defence.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 231.
2. See No. 281 and n. 3.
3. Copies of this memorandum were sent to the embassies in London and Washington, and to the Rangoon legation. On the responses of Sharett, and Avner from London, see No. 316. David Hacohen considered the matter to be complicated and not to be simply left for a decision of the Ministerial Committee. He believed that they should wait for a reply from the Chinese regarding the commercial delegation, and if this should be negative, then it would be clear that the Chinese were in no hurry to forge relations with Israel. Hacohen also took issue with the assertion that Israel's relations with Asia in general depended to a large extent on its relations with China. He was not convinced that the establishing of relations with China would raise Israel's prestige in the countries of Southeast Asia that were subject to Western influence, and expressed doubt that it would serve as a springboard to India. Eytan agreed completely with Hacohen that in any event further discussion, and definitely

any action on the issue should be postponed, until the reply from the Chinese concerning the commercial delegation was received. (See Hacohen to the director-general, 4 August 1954, and the director-general's reply, 13 August 1954, 130.02/2414/3.)

294. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Heads of Israel Missions Abroad. 20 July 1954

Stencilled circular: 130.14/2558/6

Summary

Eytan reissues the directives to heads of Israeli missions abroad concerning relations with India. Israeli diplomats are to maintain friendly relations with their Indian counterparts, but under no circumstances to raise the issue of relations between the two countries. If these representatives raise the matter, their views should be listened to attentively and reported to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but no attempt should be made to prolong the discussion. Eytan states that he has reiterated these directives since recently some Israeli representatives have brought up these matters with their Indian counterparts.

295. Summary of a Consultation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (Jerusalem, 19 July 1954)[1]

Copy: 130.02/2419/2

Summary

Participating in the consultation were the minister of foreign affairs and senior staff. The subject was the forthcoming signing of an agreement between Egypt and Britain.

Gideon Rafael opened the discussion with a report on the details of the agreement. He stated that the agreement would bring about the political strengthening of Egypt, but could have implications for the internal stability of the country, and local communist objections to its joining the West. Israel's isolation would increase, the military balance would be altered to Israel's disadvantage, and Arab pressure would increase and Arab hostility be augmented. Israel must demand a guarantee of free passage through the

Suez Canal and pressure by the Powers for the Arabs to enter into negotiations with Israel, and that arms not be given to Egypt so long as it acts against Israel. Selwyn Lloyd's approach to Israel opens the way for talks or the exchange of Notes.[3]

The minister of foreign affairs summed up the discussion. Selwyn Lloyd's declaration does not provide a solution to the problem but does make activity possible. There are two aims: to set down in definitive terms and in writing the main points he had made and to present some demands. A demand should be made that no arms be supplied to the Arab states, and if they are given, then Israel should receive arms as well. Concerning freedom of passage for shipping – the free passage of oil should also be demanded. As for the proposal to renew the Three Power Declaration he stated: 1. Care must be taken in dealing with this because it could be turned against Israel; 2. It is not binding at all, and since it is an illusion it can be used to cover up aggressive actions against Israel. However, despite the negative aspects of the Declaration, he does not advocate lack of concern towards it. The Declaration exists and every political document should be exploited to Israel's advantage. Criticism of the Declaration would create pressure for its amendment. He accepted the idea of organizing a public relations campaign and thus indirectly introducing ideas and demands. The idea of guarantees for Israel should be disseminated, and the Jewish communities involved.[5]

Notes

1. On 27 July a document entitled "Heads of Agreement," was imitialled in Cairo to end the negotiations between Britain and Egypt over the British base on the Suez Canal. It was decided that the 7-year agreement to be signed between the two countries would be based on the following principles: the evacuation of the British forces from Egypt, parts of the evacuated base would be placed at Britain's disposal in the event of an attack from outside the region, on Egypt, and on every member state of the Collective Security Pact of the Arab league, as well as on Turkey, that the Suez Canal, which was an integral part of Egypt, was an international navigation route and the two signatory nations commit themselves to maintain the Convention of Constantinople of 1888 regarding freedom of navigation in the Canal. (See Heads of Agreement, 27 July 1954, 130.02/2409/12.) The agreement itself was signed on 19 October, see No. 422 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 1 and n. 1.
3. See No. 285.
4. The economic development plan for South and Southeast Asia for the period 1951–1957. The founders were the members of the British Commonwealth (Britain, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and India, Pakistan and Ceylon), and the British territories in Southeast Asia; in 1951 the United States joined, and after that Burma, Cambodia, Nepal, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines and Thailand.

5. This summary was prepared by Z. Shek. A more detailed report on the consultations is filed under 130.20/2483/2. See also Nos. 305 and 310.

296. J. Tsur (Paris) to the West European Division.[1] 21 July 1954

Coded Tel.

Summary

He had spoken to Fouchet, minister for Tunisia and Morocco. France was about to make concessions to the local population in those countries, but with the clear intention of remaining there. Fouchet understood Israel's special interest in immigration and the situation of the Jews in both countries. He declared that in any arrangement that would be concluded, France would provide for the status and rights of the Jews. The establishment of Israeli consulates in these countries is not practical because the Arabs would make similar demands, but he is prepared to consider every Jewish Agency representative as an unofficial representative of Israel. He would give instructions to the authorities in the capitals of both countries to instruct the regional administration to grant facilities to the Jewish Agency representatives.

Note

1. To the addressee Tsur added: For the attention of the prime minister.

297. Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Defence. 23 July 1954

Copy: 43/5570/4120

Summary

Sharett summarizes the consultation held at his home on 19 July:[1]

(1) Representation of Israel at the Armistice Commissions will remain with the Ministry of Defence.

(2) In the event that a problem will arise regarding the stand to be taken in the Commission or at United Nations headquarters, consultation will be held between the Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs.

(3) In the event of disagreement, the decision of the prime minister would be final.

He added two points to the matters that had been discussed: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs could always send a representative to the Armistice Commission as it sees fit. When the Israel Defence Forces spokesman proposes to supply information to the press on deliberations in the Commissions and relations with the United Nations headquarters, this must be coordinated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs prior to release.

Sharett hopes that this will bring to an end the prolonged dispute over the issue of representation and coordination concerning the Armistice Commissions.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 284 and notes.
2. Paragraph 7 in the letter of 18 July (see No. 284, n. 2) stated that since the supply of information or guidance to the press in matters relating to the state's relations with external bodies amounted in essence to the establishing of facts in foreign policy, the I.D.F. spokesman would refrain from so doing, both in public and also behind the scenes, unless special circumstances dictated such a step, and then the information would be given in complete coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Paragraph 8 stated that the leaking of secret news reports to the press, a stratagem which it was necessary to resort to at times, would be at the discretion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
3. The dispute did not end there. Lavon did not accept this letter as a faithful summation of the consultation, but as a reiteration of Sharett's views in earlier letters, and argued that most of the members who had participated in the consultation believed that armistice affairs should remain in the hands of the Ministry of Defence. Sharett, on the other hand, maintained that on the principal question – who was to decide in the case of differences of opinion – all the participants in the consultation had supported his view that the decision was to be left to the prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs. He was prepared to raise the matter for a decision by the government, and repeated that he was not prepared under any circumstances to forego the right of decision in the matters being discussed. (Lavon to Sharett, 29 July 1954, Sharett to Lavon 3 August 1954, 130.02/2446/11). See also No. 574.

298. Meeting: P. Sapir–G. Barnes and O. Troxell (Washington, 23 July 1954)

Copy: 130.02/3694/6

Summary

Sapir met with Barnes and Troxell to discuss the continuation of Johnston's plans and activities.[1]

Sapir stressed that the plan for partial allocation of the waters, as prepared by Israeli and American officials, including Barnes and Troxell, after Johnston had left Israel, was the absolute minimum. It would be possible to persuade the Israeli government to accept this plan if no further cuts were made.

They replied that they were convinced of the fairness of the plan, but the problem was to persuade the Arabs. It is quite possible that it will be necessary to make further cuts, about 60–100 cubic metres in order to reach an agreement. The time had come to take the matter out of the hands of the water engineers and transfer it to the politicians, as the decision to be made is political. They repeated this a number of times and stressed the general advantages that would counterbalance the loss of water: the possibility of obtaining the Litani River waters at some later date; cooperation with the Arabs as a first step to reaching an agreement; financial assistance from America; the time factor – concessions and arrangements that would come into force only in 10 or 15 years time. They stated that there was no possibility that the Arabs would accept the plan in its present form and stressed that their aim at this time was to prepare a plan in such a form that would be acceptable to the Arabs.

The discussion ended in an exchange on the allocation of waters according to "efficient use in the Jordan basin." Sapir asked if Johnston's declaration on this matter referred only to the remainder that would be left after the initial allocation according to the terms which had been agreed in Israel. Or was it that Johnston had returned to his opening stand and insisted on the principle regarding the entire amount of water. Barnes replied that this principle was of importance to the Arabs and they were insisting on this. Sapir had the impression that the matter was still not settled.

Notes

1. See No. 280.
2. See No. 283 and notes. Already in the meeting with Shiloah on 16 July Johnston had vigorously denied the statements attributed to him in the press, according to the U.P.

agency, concerning Benot Yaaqov, and also another story that had appeared in *Time*, ostensibly in his name, that Israel was reconciled to the fact that utilization of the water would be limited solely to the Jordan River basin. (See Shiloah to the United States Division, WIA676, 16 July 1954, 93.01/2210/14.)

299. Note from the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. 27 July 1954

Note

1. On 19 June, in the area of Wadi Fukin (Mevo Betar) an incident occurred in which three members of Kibbutz Mevo Betar were killed. On 23 June, the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission, in the absence of the Israeli delegation, adopted a resolution sharply condemning Israel for incursion into Jordanian territory and firing mortars from Israeli territory into Jordan. The U.N. communiqué stated that the bodies had been found about 150 metres inside Jordanian territory. The Israeli version was that the kibbutz members were attacked while inside Israeli territory, and the bodies of the slain had been dragged into Jordanian territory.

   In a letter of 23 June to the prime minister, General Bennike protested at the interference in the observers' investigation, in that the commander and soldiers in the area had prevented them by threat of weapons from entering the scene of the incident. In this context he mentioned his correspondence with Chief of Staff Dayan in May concerning a similar case of preventing the freedom of movement and access of the observers who came to investigate at the site of the incident in Khirbet Illin. (The letter in File 130.02/2431/11.)

   The U.N. secretary-general also protested, in a letter of 24 June, to the minister of foreign affairs, over "this gross violation of the Armistice Agreements" and asked that an immediate inquiry into the incident be conducted in order to take steps required to ensure the free movement of U.N. personnel in the course of their duty. (Letter, ibid.)

300. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington.[1] 28 July 1954

Coded Tel. IWA688; Outg.: 130.09/2310/7

Summary

At the initiative of the minister of defence, a meeting was held with Bennike to discuss fishing rights in Lake Tiberias in the event that the Syrians should raise the matter at the meeting of the Mixed Armistice Commission, set for the next day, to deal with the incident which had taken place on 15 March.[2]

The minister stressed that this problem did not come within the sphere of the Armistice Agreement, but if the Syrians were interested in coming to an arrangement on this matter as well as on the issue of the use of waters in Lake Tiberias, Israel would be prepared to meet with them, but would retain the right to raise matters of concern to it. It was agreed that the chairman would announce that the Commission did not have the authority to take a decision and would ensure that no resolution be passed on this matter, but the Syrians would not be prevented from expressing their opinion.[3]

Notes

1. Sent also to London, Paris and Rome.
2. See No. 110.
3. A detailed summary of the conversation in File 130.02/2434/6. At the meeting that took place the next day, 29 July, the Syrians did in fact raise the problem of their rights in Lake Tiberias, rejected the validity of the 15 March decision, and demanded that the chairman arrange a special meeting for interpreting the instructions of the Armistice Agreement, in order to determine whether the agreement did in fact prevent the Syrians fishing in Lake Tiberias. Without determining that the Commission did not have the authority to decide in the matter, the chairman suggested holding an unofficial meeting, but the Syrians were opposed to any discussion that was not held in the Commission. (See telegram from Tekoah to Washington, London, Paris and Rome, and a press communiqué from the U.N. on the meeting, both on 30 July 1954, 130.16/2954/7.)

301. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 28 July 1954

Coded Tel.

Summary

Rafael cables directives for the reaction of Israeli representatives concerning the signing of the agreement between Britain and Egypt.[1]

Israel has no objection to the fulfilment of Egypt's legitimate demands, but is concerned at the absence of an Egyptian undertaking to follow a policy of peace and allow freedom of passage. Implementation of the agreement and the supply of American arms that could follow would change the balance of forces and would increase aggressive trends within Egypt, as had been expressed in recent speeches.[2] The agreement is not conditional upon Egypt joining the Western security system, and according to Israeli sources Egypt has refused to do so.

Notes

1. See No. 295, n. 1.
2. This is a reference to the speech by Salih Salim in Beirut (see No. 279, n. 1) and to a speech made by Nasser in Cairo on the second anniversary of the military coup. In this speech he declared that if Israel did not halt its aggression and observe the U.N. resolutions, there was liable to be an explosion in the situation in the Middle East. (See *Ha'aretz*, 23 July 1954.)
3. See No. 295.
4. In a speech before an Air Force gathering on July 28, Sharett described the forthcoming Anglo-Egyptian agreement as representing a serious change in the balance of power between Israel and the region around it. He said that Egypt would be tested in the use it made of the national asset, which in fact was a global asset, which it was about to come into. He mentioned the threats of aggression emanating from its leaders, warned against handing this strategic asset to Egypt without making the agreement conditional even on the cessation of the blockade of the Suez Canal, and declared that Israel would continue to oppose it by all lawful means at its disposal and by recruiting international support for this struggle. (The minister's remarks were transmitted to Israeli missions abroad, 3 August 1954, 130.02/2409/12.)

302. Note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the U.S. Embassy in Israel. 29 July 1954

Notes

1. The letter of reply to the 11-point proposal of 19 June (see No 256 and n. 1) was handed to the American chargé d'affaires, Russell, on 29 July. On 30 July, a similarly worded reply was handed to the British embassy and a copy of the reply was delivered on the same day to the French embassy. (See reports to Israel missions abroad, 2 August 1954, 130.02/2431/11.)
2. This paragraph replaced the one deleted because of Rafael's reservations, and this was its wording:

   "Among the preventive measures, the Government would urge the removal into the interior of Jordan territory of such refugee camps and concentrations as exist in the border zone."

   Rafael was opposed to this paragraph because he believed that Jordan could not accept such a proposal, which constituted intervention in its internal affairs, and because the infiltration in the main did not come from these camps but from the villages bordering Israel, which had lost lands that lay on the Israeli side of the border. (See Rafael to the minister of foreign affairs, 26 July 1954, 130.15/3749/4.)

303. M. Kidron (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 29 July 1954

Coded Tel. XA993; Outg.: 93.01/2182/1

Summary

Reports on his meeting with the United Nations secretary-general. Two subjects were discussed: the ruling of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission concerning the events in Jerusalem[1] and the Syrian complaint against Israel on signs attesting to Israel's intention to renew work on diversion of the Jordan River.[2] Eban stated that Bennike's refusal to find Jordan responsible for the opening of fire in Jerusalem created a bad impression in Israel, and added to the general attitude of leniency towards Jordan, which allows itself to violate the Armistice Agreements without any reaction. Hammarskjöld said in reply that he was certain of Bennike's sincerity, but had no solutions for Jordan's reactions.

Concerning the renewal of work, Eban stressed that a way must be found to carry this out in accordance with the recommendations of the Dixon-Eysvoogel report.[3] The matter remained with Bennike who could permit the renewal, refuse it, or refrain from making a decision. The secretary-general replied that in his opinion Bennike would refuse, and in that case the issue would be returned to the Security Council and that would result in a Soviet veto. In his opinion, the matter should be resolved through negotiation between the parties outside the Security Council, and he recommended that Israel talk to the British and Americans about it.

Notes

1. See No. 287 (Editorial Note).
2. The instruction to bring up the subject in a meeting with the U.N. secretary-general was sent since, on 20 July, the permanent Syrian representative to the U.N. had handed a letter to the president of the Security Council, for distribution to the Council members, in which it protested that signs on the ground testified to an Israeli attempt to renew the work in the Demilitarized Zone for diverting the Jordan River. He maintained that the Security Council resolution of 27 October 1953 – that the work in the Demilitarized Zone had to be halted until the Council reached a final decision – was still in force, since the final resolution had still not been adopted, and warned that his government could not accept any responsibility for what might happen if the work resumed. (See the text of the letter in Justman's telegrams to the M.F.A., 20 July 1954, 21 July 1954, 130.16/2954/4.)
3. See No. 241 and n. 1.

304. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 30 July 1954

Notes

1. According to a report by Sharett during the government meeting, Russell spoke from a written text, but stressed that it was not an official message or a Note Verbale, therefore the spoken words were important and not their formal framework. According to American sources, the instruction to make the remarks was cabled from the Department of State, after reports had reached them regarding Israel's intention to resume work in the Demilitarized Zone. (See Sharett's report to the government meeting, 1 August, 1954, and Shiloah's telegram to the United States Division, 26 July 1954. 130.09/2310/11; *FRUS 1952-54,* Vol. IX (part 1), No. 843). The corrections in the document in italics and brackets were entered according to the American wording.
2. According to Sharett's report to the government, he had replied to Russell: "here you threaten us and build wall upon wall. The first wall, the Head of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization, the second wall, the Security Council, the third wall, Syrian agreement; and in addition to all of these, your sanctions."
3. Later Johnston, in a conversation with Eban, expressed regret for Russell's statement. He noted that it did not reflect his attitude to the Benot Yaaqov project and the Department of State had no right to rely on him to adopt a negative attitude to the resumption of the project, and added that Israel's restraint over the last eight months had been exemplary. His personal view was that it was desirable to refrain from renewing the work for a few weeks longer, in the full confidence that the project would eventually be implemented, but he had no demands to make, and it was up to the Israeli government to carefully weigh up the situation and to reach an independent decision. He also said that the president shared his view, that is to say, favoured the project, and if the Israeli government decided to continue with a halt in the work, the United States would be prepared, immediately upon his return from his next visit to the region, to proceed to openly support the resumption of the work. (See Eban's telegram to the United States Division, W1A739, 5 August 1954, 93.01/2210/16.)
4. Lehrman wrote his article after visiting Israel and meeting Israeli personalities. He reviewed the points of dispute between Israel and the United States over the question of the inclusion of the Arabs in the regional defence scheme and the military assistance to Iraq, and perceived signs of impatience and extremism in the Israeli public, in view of the unceasing tension on the borders, and especially among the military, part of whom believed that a war was inevitable and better that it should come sooner than later, and that in the meantime vigorous reprisal actions should be undertaken.
5. The matter is not known.
6. Eytan said in a radio broadcast that Israel had never placed obstacles in the way of Egypt to realize its national aspirations, but it was concerned about what it would do with the military assets that fell into its hands. The decision of the United States to give military aid to Iraq and even more to Egypt undermined the balance of power in the Middle East, the preservation of which had been declared by the Three Powers

in 1950. Therefore he called for preventing the supply of arms to Egypt, or else to supply Israel with quantities of equal value. (See the text of the radio broadcast, 25 July 1954, 130.02/2419/2.)

7. This refers to a political and friendly cooperation pact between Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia in August 1954, which replaced a similar pact signed in February 1953. It was limited to 20 years, and included a permanent council at the level of foreign ministers.
8. The reference is to a tragedy that occurred in the vicinity of Kibbutz Ma'agan on Lake Tiberias on 29 July, in the course of a memorial assembly for the paratrooper Peretz Goldstein, when a light aircraft plunged into the crowd, killing 17 people and wounding 23.

305. Summary of a Consultation.[1] (Jerusalem, 31 July 1954)

Copy: 93.04/41/6

Summary

The consultation was called to discuss the implications of the signing of the agreement between Britain and Egypt. Participating, in addition to the minister, were senior Ministry personnel, as well as Ambassador Elath.

The minister of foreign affairs stated that the aim of this meeting was not to take decisions but rather to exchange ideas. Israel could no longer make any impact on the agreement. At the same time, it was obvious that the British were not unconcerned as regards Israel and perhaps this situation could be exploited to Israel's advantage, possibly to obtain strategic cooperation or unilateral aid.

The director-general listed Israeli demands, including freedom of passage through the Suez Canal, the balance of forces in the Middle East, guarantees for Israel's integrity, cessation of hostile activities and the abolition of the embargo.

Ambassador Elath agreed with the prime minister's assumption concerning discontent regarding the agreement, which was widespread in Britain. He did not see possibilities of change or any concessions to Israel. The situation throughout the world increases Britain's dependence upon the Arabs. Written clarification regarding the issue of free passage should be demanded. He argued that this was an opportunity to submit to Britain and the United States far-reaching proposals concerning military understandings. The minister of foreign affairs replied that Israel had done everything possible in this matter, but had received a negative reply from the United States. Britain had preferred to negotiate with Egypt before coming to any arrangement with Israel.

It was concluded that a Note was to be prepared for submission to Britain. Meetings should also be held with the heads of the military and their opinion sounded out.[5]

Notes

1. The summary was made on 1 August 1954. On the agreement and the consultation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs prior to its signature, see No. 295 and n. 1.
2. See No. 1.
3. See No. 213.
4. See No. 304.
5. On the consultation with the representatives of the I.D.F. see No. 310. The Note submitted to British government, see No. 376.

306. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the United States Division. 31 July 1954

Coded Tel WIA716; Outg.: 93.01/2210/14

Summary

Ambassador Eban, together with Shiloah, had met with Byroade. The ambassador expressed Israel's anxiety concerning the situation created by the signing of the agreement between Britain and Egypt. He presented Israel's demands:

(1) Refraining from the supply of military aid to Egypt in the present situation.

(2) If the United States is intent on supplying arms to Egypt, Israel requests consideration of its request for military aid.

(3) The United States government should commence negotiations with Israel to guarantee its borders.

(4) The United States government should emphatically demand that Egypt fulfil the Security Council resolution concerning freedom of passage for shipping through the Suez Canal.

Byroade replied that the United States government was committed to the improvement of relations between Israel and Egypt. He raised the idea, stressing that this had not been discussed previously in any forum, of a pact between Israel and the United States guaranteeing the borders. He asked whether Israel would be prepared to agree to include in such a pact an undertaking on its part to maintain the present borders. Eban replied that it was all a matter of formulation and asked if Israel would be required to make

any border changes. When pressed, he replied that his intention was only for minor changes, when the border cut through villages, or separated a village from its lands. Eban replied that Israel had in the past agreed to mutual border changes.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Byroade repeated the United States, commitment to the improvement of relations between Israel and Egypt, but on the other hand it was committed to begin the supply of military aid to Egypt immediately after the signing of the agreement, although the extent and pace of this commitment had not been detailed.

Notes

1. See No. 310 and n. 4.
2. The reference is to the Israeli government's request for military aid without payment, which was presented in February 1952 and was turned down.
3. The reference is to Eden's announcement in Parliament on 28 July 1954 about the Anglo-Egyptian agreement. Eden used this occasion to re-assert Britain's intention to maintain the Three Power Declaration of 1950, and added that the agreement would include, amongst other things, a clause recognizing the economic, commercial and strategic importance of the Suez Canal, and would express the firm intention of the two sides to honour the 1888 Convention which ensured freedom of navigation in the Canal. In replies to questions, Eden stressed that the Egyptians prevented the passage through the Canal only of strategic material destined for Israel.
4. On 4 August 1954, an agreement between the government of Iran and an international consortium of 8 oil companies was initialled, that settled the dispute between Iran and the companies which had been continuing since the nationalization of the oil industry by the Iranian government in 1951. They agreed to the operating of the oilfields and refineries in Iran, on the marketing of the oil, on Iran's share of the revenues, and on the compensation to be paid to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company for its nationalized property.

307. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 1 August 1954

Note

1. No. 304. In another telegram Sharett explained that in the matters he had referred to in the two versions he had cabled in his reply to Russell, the version recorded here is the more exact one. (See Sharett to Eban, IW702, 1 August 1954. 130.09/2310/7.)

308. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 2 August 1954

Coded Tel. IWA703; Outg.: 130.09/2310/7

Summary

Sharett sends instructions for the forthcoming meeting with Dulles. He refers, first of all, to Russell's statements as reported in No. 304, which were read from a prepared text upon instructions from the Department of State. This was a candid and clearly defined exposition of the United States policy. The conclusion was that during the next ten years, the United States would change the balance of forces in the Middle East to the detriment of Israel, strengthen its ties with the Arab countries, and supply arms to the Arabs. All that was left to Israel was to put its trust in the Almighty, the United States and the eleven-point plan,[3] with no guarantees whatsoever. Israel must remain silent because if it raises its voice in protest it will be accused of obstructing the United States' defence efforts in the Middle East as well as of having aggressive intentions.

Thus the line to follow at the meeting should be aggressive, and it would be best not to make any proposals apart from the demand not to supply arms to the Arabs. Pressure should be brought to bear to force them to put forward proposals of their own. The discussion should avoid exploring the efforts being made in Cairo to bring the Egyptians to agree to peace, as this would require no commitment on their part, and would divert them from the main issue – evacuation of the bases and supplying arms to Egypt. Furthermore, the proposal for an agreement to guarantee the borders should not be revived, because an undertaking of this sort can only be given by Israel to its neighbours and not by Israel to the United States. If in his reply Dulles should refer to the Three Power Declaration, its insignificance should be exposed, as it is in any case being violated by the arming of one party only. If Dulles should hint at any new guarantee, the question should be clarified as to whether it is directed at Israel alone, and what exactly he is proposing. The general direction should be as negative as possible, forcing them to speak frankly for better or worse. In addition, denunciation in the press and radio of the American policy which is abandoning Israel is essential.[5]

Notes

1. No. 304.
2. See No. 306.

3. Reference is apparently to the 11-point proposal suggested by the Western Powers to ease tensions on the border.
4. This apparently is a reference to the French saying: "Cet animal est très mechant, quand on l'attaque il se défend", meaning, this animal is very wicked; when it is attacked it defends itself.
5. The United States Division also added to these directives (see telegram W710, 3 August 1954, 130.09/2310/7). The next day Sharett also added No. 309. For details of the meeting, see No. 313.

309. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 3 August 1954

Coded Tel. IWA708; Outg.: 130.09/2310/7

Summary

Sharett sends further directives for the meeting with Dulles.[1] It is essential to denounce the fact that Israel has been removed from the list of countries that, if attacked, require the operation of the base in Egypt. Yet, an undertaking has been given to operate the base in the event that one of the member countries of the collective security pact of the Arab League is attacked. These two facts add to the picture of Israel having been abandoned, and a guarantee of aid given to a collective organization established for the sole purpose of taking a stand against Israel. This is contrary to the numerous undertakings given to Israel that the regional defence system would not be based on the Arab League's collective security pact.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 308.
2. See, for example, Vol. 7, Nos. 46, 48, Vol. 8, No. 257.

310. Consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (Jerusalem, 3 August 1954)

Minutes:[1] 130.15/3744/2

Summary

Participating in the consultation were senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, senior army personnel and representatives of the Prime Minister's Office. The discussion centred on the political and military implications of the Anglo-Egyptian agreement on the evacuation of the Suez Canal Zone. The general conclusion was that the agreement was detrimental to Israel's political, military, and economic situation and political or military steps should be taken to improve its position. Two main proposals were raised in the course of the discussion – (1) breaching the maritime blockade against Israel by sending a ship flying the Israeli flag through the Tiran Straits and the Suez Canal and (2) submitting a Note to Britain requesting guarantees and explanations regarding the agreement. For further information about the consultation and the conclusions see Nos. 312 and 318.[8]

Notes

1. The corrections and additions in brackets in this document are according to an earlier draft in the file.
2. See Vol. 7, Nos. 50 and 68.
3. See Vol. 8, No. 176 and No. 1 in the present volume.
4. This refers to a list drawn up in accordance with the Security Council resolution of 29 May 1948 on a cease-fire in Palestine - see Vol. I, appendix 5, pp. 666–667.
5. See No. 306, and n. 3.
6. See No. 285.
7. For details of Tekoah's suggestions concerning all four problems, see No. 312.
8. For more on this discussion see No. 318. An additional consultation – see No. 332. Shiloah's response see No. 345, and the letter presented to the British Foreign Office, see No. 376.

311. Decisions taken at a Meeting at the Ministry of Defence. (Tel Aviv, 2 August 1954, Document dated 3 August 1954)

Copy: 130.02/2394/5

Summary

The meeting dealt with the visit to Paris of the chief of the general staff.[1] It was decided that the visit would be of both a military and political nature, but the chief of the general staff should stress the military aspect, and if he is asked political questions he should avoid replying. He should stress the calm and determination existing in Israel despite recent political developments. He should express Israel's firm intention to maintain the tranquillity existing on its borders. In the area of arms purchase, he should state that in light of the breach of the balance of arms in the Middle East, France was free to sell military equipment to Israel without restriction. He should stress the common interest of France and Israel in the maintenance of the independence of Syria and Lebanon, although in all these matters he should restrict himself to general statements and not enter into concrete details.[3]

Notes

1. The idea of the visit was raised by the French ambassador in Israel, Gilbert, who suggested taking advantage of Dayan's return from his visit to the United States to make an official visit to France. The official invitation for the visit was presented on behalf of the Minister of Defence, Koenig, and the Chief of Staff, Guillaume, to the military attaché in Paris, Syrkin. The reactions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the government were positive. (See memoranda of Eytan to the West European Division, 11-12 July 1954, 130.02/2394/5; Sharett's remarks at the government session, 9 August, 1954.)
2. Reference is to Gilbert's appeal to the West European Division that Israel would examine the possibility of evacuating the Notre Dame building in Jerusalem, which had been occupied by the I.D.F. since May 1948 (see telegram of the Division to the Israel embassy in Paris), No. 78, 30 July 1954, 130.02/2320/1.)
3. See No. 328.

312. Y. Tekoah [Jerusalem] to G. Rafael. 4 August 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2419/2

Summary

Tekoah remarks on the consultation which took place concerning the Anglo-Egyptian agreement.[1] In his opinion, Israel will be not be able to reach an agreement on the passage of a ship flying an Israeli flag through the Suez Canal and the Tiran Straits, or sending a Note to Britain, before it determines its line of political action and makes plans for its implementation. In his opinion there are four groups of problems about which positions have to be taken:

1. Israel's opposition to the arming of the Arab countries
2. Israel's demand to receive military equipment
3. Relations between Israel and Egypt
4. Type of alliance with the Powers (agreement, bases).

In his opinion, there is no contradiction between Israel's continuing to object to arming the Arabs and its demand for military equipment. Israel has the right to receive arms on its own merits and does not have to explain or apologize for having changed its policy to opposition to arming the Arabs. It must intensify its arguments against arming the Arabs and for the supply of military equipment to Israel. Arguments should be brought against the Department of State's contention that the United States is aiming to provide security for the region. In his talks with senior military personnel he has gained the impression that it is possible to put forward powerful arguments of this nature.

Regarding relations between Israel and Egypt, the new situation, with all its difficulties, should be exploited to work toward reaching an arrangement with that country. In his opinion, this should be done as quickly as possible, before Egypt becomes aware of the increase of its military strength.[2]

In his opinion, there is no choice but to explain Israel's position on this issue, whether on the matter of the Three Power Declaration or if help with building infrastructure is proposed to Israel, the matter of the supply of bases. He believes that Israel should object forcefully to the renewal of the Three Power Declaration and be wary of any discussion of alternatives. He does not believe that in such an event Israel would succeed in obtaining an effective security alliance with the Powers.

He proposes setting up a special committee consisting of representatives of all those involved to make intensive efforts to plan modes of action.[3]

Notes

1. No. 310.
2. Concerning this, Rafael wrote in the margin of the memorandum: "perfectly true. If only they would give us one card, that is an American announcement to Egypt that they will not give aid until the blockade is lifted, we would be making a great step forward, for then we could prove to Egypt that the key to the American purse is in our pocket."
3. Beside these words Rafael wrote: "I am a great advocate of planning and coordination, but the reality of our life precludes this since there is no unanimity regarding fundamental orientations." See also No. 318.

313. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 4 August 1954

Coded Tel. WIA730; Outg.: 93.01/2210/16

Summary

Meeting with Dulles, with Shiloah and Jernegan participating.

Eban began by stating that Israel was concerned over the nature of relations with the United States as well as the manner and tone of the last meeting with Russell.[1] He said that he did not intend to discuss the issue of the renewal of work on diversion of the Jordan River, but was concerned about the manner in which the Department of State related to the matter and its absolute objection to the renewal of activity. This was in complete contrast to Dulles' promises, the opinion of the majority of members of the Security Council and the opinions of the experts. Israel's main concern at the present time is the terms of the Anglo-Egyptian agreement, and United States reaction to it. This agreement changes the balance of forces and the reaction of the United States is no more than meaningless words. The feeling in Israel is that its greatest friend has abandoned it and its security concerns have been ignored.

The secretary replied that the Anglo-Egyptian agreement constitutes a positive shift in the area and will place the political relationships between the countries of the region on a healthier basis. The United States supports the agreement, but on no account does it wish to harm Israel. The plan to supply military equipment is limited and will do no more that supply light weapons for the requirements of internal security. Prior to any supply of arms, a survey mission will be sent to Egypt. The plan to supply arms to Iraq has not yet been formulated, and will depend on Iraq's attitude to Israel. The experts say that Israel is strong, its strength equal to that of all the Arab states put together. The United States does not wish to change the situation of Israel's

military superiority. Israel should not consider itself as having been abandoned; it has strong public support in the United States. He was most concerned at the loss of credibility of the United States in Israel, and would like to take some steps to reassure Israel. He asked if a public statement by him about some of the basic principles of United States policy in the region would help to diminish Israel's anxiety.

Eban replied that the main point was to abolish discrimination against Israel in the sphere of military aid and questioned their statement about Israel's military superiority. It would be important if the secretary make a statement about freedom of passage of shipping through the Suez Canal and about guarantees that would be given. It should also state that Egypt should not exploit its power to attack Israel. But the main point is the discriminatory arming of the Arabs.

They agreed to meet again.[3]

Notes

1. See Nos. 304, 308 and 309.
2. See No. 279 and n. 1.
3. In an urgent telegram which he sent prior to the telegram presented here, Eban wrote to Sharett that after a full hour's conversation, the secretary said that he did not wish to finish hurriedly since the issues Eban had raised were important and were cause for concern. Particularly worrisome was the feeling of despair and despondency, and he wished to issue a carefully considered statement that would stress the concern for Israel's security. He suggested meeting again before Eban left, and in the meantime he would manage to think the matter over. (See telegram W1A726, 4 August 1954, 93.01/2210/16.) See also Nos. 314 and 317.

314. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 4 August 1954

Notes

1. See No. 313.
2. Concerning freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal.
3. In another telegram on the same day, Eban explained that there was no certainty that anything at all on the lines Israel suggested would come from Dulles. Pangs of conscience and plenty of voices there and in London would try to dissuade him from any commitment to Israel. It was the first time anyone in office had shown any serious concern concerning Israel's position but it was very problematical if anything would come out of it. In any case, Israel must keep up the momentum as much as possible. (See Eban to Sharett, W732, 4 August 1954, 93.01/2211/11.) See also Sharett's reply in Nos. 317, 320.

315. M. Avidan (Warsaw) to the East European Division. 4 August 1954

Coded. Tel. 11; Inc.: 130.09/2306/6

Summary

He was summoned to a meeting with Sluczanski, director of the Eastern Department of the Polish Foreign Ministry, who complained that the Israeli representatives were not acting in accordance with diplomatic practice, as regards contacts with Jews, in the synagogues as well as in other places, indulging in propaganda and trying to persuade Polish citizens to submit requests for imigration. The Government of Poland considers these activities as intervention in its internal affairs. He requested that these activities cease. Full details will be sent by mail, but in the meantime he requests instructions as to whether he should reply.[1]

Note

1. See Avidan to the director of the East European Division, 11 August 1954, (130.11/2492/21.) On 6 August the East European Division cabled instructions for a conversation with Sluczanski in response to his statement: to reject the argument that the visits of Israeli diplomats to towns and villages throughout Poland, their appearance in synagogues and their talks with Polish citizens constituted any violation of diplomatic procedure; to stress that the Israeli diplomats were not engaged in propaganda for emigration to Israel, although they were asked questions now and again on this subject; there existed the problem of separated families; to stress the issue of reciprocity in view of the freedom of movement and action of the Polish diplomats in Israel. Avidan replied that in his opinion there was in fact no need to react. Already in that same conversation he had rejected outright as utterly baseless the claims of Sluczanski that Israeli representatives had exploited their visits for propaganda purposes and encouraging emigration, and at the moment there were no signs that the Polish statement indicated intentions to break off any contact. He added that in a conversation with Sluczanski he had not broached the key question of the right to visit synagogues, conversations with citizens or the issue of reciprocity, in order not to imperil the close contacts existing between the legation and the Jews of Poland. (See East European Division to the legation in Warsaw, 6 August 1954, 130.09/2306/3, telegram from Avidan to the M.F.A., 10 August 1954, 130.09/2306/6.)

316. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 4 August 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2414/3

Summary

Sharett writes that he has read Avner's reaction to the proposal to expedite the establishment of relations with China.[1] He believes that neither the director-general nor Avner appreciate the full consequence of the renewal of relations with China. Contrary to the positive reasons for the establishment of relations, there are also negative arguments. Without stating which are dominant, the positive or the negative, he points out two negative aspects: firstly, the apprehension that a situation could come about whereby Israel would be the first country in the Middle East where a Chinese foothold would be created and the Chinese, as is well known, are in the process of expanding throughout the entire Asian continent; secondly, the danger that this would reinforce the Communist Party among Israeli Arabs, which could also cause difficulties in relations with the United States.[2]

Notes

1. In response to Eytan's memorandum on the relations with China (No. 293), Avner wrote that he was happy to learn that Eytan was in favour of establishing diplomatic relations. He had no doubt that this would benefit Israel, be well received in Britain, and would not meet serious opposition in the United States. (Eytan's letter, 27 July 1954, 130.02/2414/3.)
2. Avner's opinion remained unchanged even after he had read Sharett's reply. He did not attach particular importance to the appearance of a Chinese representative in Israel, and even asserted that the Chinese would not hurry to send a representative to Israel until they had sent a representative to one of the Arab states as well. At the same time, he wrote that if the ambassador in the United States was convinced that the establishment of relations was liable to harm Israel's standing in American public opinion, there was no choice but to accept his judgment. (123.02/2414/3.)

317. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 5 August 1954

Coded Tel. 717; Outg.: 130.09/2310/7

Summary

Sharett sends instructions for Eban's meeting with Bedell Smith,[2] and Dulles.[3] He should stress the absolute impropriety of supplying arms of any type to Egypt prior to its making peace with Israel, or at least cessation of the state of hostility. He should stress that the Arab states would never fight against the Soviet Union, and the proof of this was their stand during World War II. He should also emphatically deny their assumption of Israel's military superiority, which has no factual basis, especially as Egypt and the Arabs were to receive arms from Britain and the United States.

Notes

1. See No. 314 and n. 3.
2. This refers to a meeting Eban was due to have that same day with Bedell Smith. In the meeting Smith rebuked Eban for the excessive nervousness and resentment he had exhibited in his conversation with Dulles (See No. 314) "who had decided now to deal personally with the matter", and assured him that the United States had no intention of abandoning Israel. The United States was currently engaged in a process of improving the situation in the region, and Israel's turn would also come. In the first place it was their intention to act against the Egyptian blockade in the Suez Canal. As to military aid and Israel's incorporation into the regional defence system, this was only a question of time. Smith also vigorously denied the Israeli claim that in the Anglo-Egyptian agreement there was reliance on the Arab League's collective defence pact, and noted that the British had carefully avoided mentioning the League in the agreement. (See Eban to the United States Division, WIA737, 5 August 1954, and Eban to Rafael, WIA745, 6 August 1954, 93.01/2210/16.)
3. See No. 321.
4. See No. 307 and n. 1.

318. G. Rafael and Sh. Divon [Jerusalem] to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 5 August 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2419/2

Summary

Rafael and Divon write about Israel's policy following the Anglo-Egyptian agreement for the evacuation of Suez.[1]

In the light of probable change in the balance of power to the detriment of Israel, the question arises whether this situation requires a change in the actions Israel should take. Can Israel stop this process through diplomatic and public measures, through military action or by taking direct steps against the maritime blockade not requiring military intervention? In the event of a decision to take action requiring military intervention, this should be accompanied by an information campaign stressing that these actions have been taken with the aim of exploiting all diplomatic and public avenues. If these steps do not succeed then the matter will require further consideration.

Rafael and Divon outline the diplomatic activities and their aim. These would stress freedom of passage through the Suez Canal; the involvement of Israel in a regional security framework; the cessation of hostilities by Egypt; fulfilment of assurances to Israel that military equipment and ammunition would be removed from the Canal Zone, guarantees in the body of the agreement that the installations and equipment left in the base would be used only for regional defence; the holding up of provision of weapons to Egypt until such time as its policy of aggression would cease, including the maritime blockade. There was also the need to supply military aid to Israel.

There are two possibilities for further action: Sending a ship flying the Israeli flag to Eilat, and in the event that the ship was stopped, military action would be taken. The second possibility would be to send a ship and if it was stopped, restricting the reaction to political and public measures. In this case, if political and public activity failed military action could again be considered.

They point out that Israel's public and legal position regarding the Straits of Eilat (Tiran) is less favourable than that regarding Suez, and a long legal battle can be expected. If the passage through the Straits should succeed then an attempt should be made to send a vessel through the Suez Canal to Haifa.

All these activities should be carried out speedily prior to the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian agreement.

Note

1. See No. 310.

319. Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 5 August 1954

Coded Tel. 25; Inc.: 130.09/2326/2

Summary

Eliashiv reports on his conversation with Vyshinsky when submitting his credentials as Israeli ambassador.[1] The conversation was held on two levels, with Eliashiv endeavouring to direct it towards political issues and especially the military agreements with the Arabs, while Vyshinsky replied in general terms about universal matters. He reiterated the old argument that the involvement of the Powers hindered the Jews and Arabs from reaching an agreement. He concluded with a vague sentence that when the major problems of the world are solved, a solution to the Arab-Israel conflict will be found.

Notes

1. The meeting with Vyshinsky, the Soviet deputy minister of foreign affairs, was for the purpose of presenting a copy of Eliashiv's credentials as Israel's ambassador in Moscow. On the decision to raise the level of the legations of the two states to the level of embassies see No. 194 and n. 2.
2. Russian: someone from the same city.

320. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 6 August 1954

Coded Tel. 721; Outg.: 130.09/2310/7

Summary

With reference to Eban's telegram concerning his forthcoming meeting with Dulles,[1] Sharett sends directives for the meeting. He warns against a vague proposal of clauses for the American declaration, first of all because of the

tendency to be satisfied with empty words and secondly because there is no assurance that the formulation will not be distorted in the Department of State. Thus it would be preferable to continue to complain and express disapproval, so that Dulles will reach his own conclusions and make whatever statements he wished, and Israel would remain uncommitted.

He also comments on the various proposals in the clauses listed by Eban in No. 314. The conclusion of the matter is that he should continue the attack on all fronts and urge Dulles to offer Israel arms and the supply of oil as a condition for any aid to Egypt, as well as guarantees for the borders. He should say to Dulles that he should make it clear to the Arabs that without these terms there would be "hell to pay" with the American public concerning aid to Egypt.[4]

Notes

1. No. 314.
2. This refers to a motion for the agenda introduced by Begin on behalf of the Herut faction at the Knesset meeting of 4 August. The motion called for the "elimination of the Egyptian base in Palestine, namely the Gaza Strip, which was a base for aggression, and to uproot the enemy from within it, and do so as long as this was possible by political and military means, without special difficulty and without many losses, before the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian agreement, for then Egypt would receive British installations and American arms." (See *Divrei Ha-Knesset* (Knesset Reports), third session of the Second Knesset, Vol. XV1, p 2301 [Hebrew].)
3. See No. 306, n. 4.
4. Sharett dictated the above directives before he saw Eban's telegram no. 726 (see No. 313 and n. 3 there), and understood that the main reason for the interview with Dulles was the statement that he wished to make, and Eban could not avoid a conversation about it. Therefore he instructed him to explain that a calming public statement would be ineffective unless it established practical measures, and if the choice lay between actions without a statement and a statement without actions, then the choice was quite obvious. For example, if they were capable of getting Egypt to give an undertaking to allow the passage of oil to Israel and to cease all interference with Israeli shipping, but making a statement to this effect would prove detrimental, Israel wouldn't mind at all; on the other hand, a statement of principle that failed to present any conditions to Egypt was worthless. In any case, he repeated his instruction to Eban not to make any suggestions for a statement to Dulles, but only to hear what he had to say and to tell him that he would convey his remarks to the Israeli government for its reaction. (Telegram 722, 6 August 1954, 130.09/2310/7.) The conversation with Dulles – see No. 321.

321. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 7 August 1954

Notes

1. See No. 313.
2. See No. 320.
3. According to information Ch. Herzog had received from a Department of State source, Dulles was surprised by Eban's assertion and at once instructed the Pentagon to prepare an assessment of the extent of the military danger posed to Israel by the arming of Iraq and Egypt. The same source called this request "revolutionary". (Telegram from Ch. Herzog, 764, 12 August 1954, 130.09/2310/11.)
4. The reference is to the Department of State's reply of 2 August to the letter of 27 July from eight senators and congressmen headed by Senator Saltonstall. They submitted to the Department of State a proposal to include in the Anglo-Egyptian agreement a commitment to lift the restrictions on navigation in the Suez Canal to Israel and from it, and were told that they must be satisfied with the general reference contained in the agreement, and that it was inappropriate to bring up a new major topic at this stage of the negotiations. The Department of State also reiterated in its reply that it fully supported the 1951 Security Council resolution on this matter, and would continue, as it had done in the past, to press Egypt to comply with this resolution. (See the correspondence in File 130.02/2450/1.)
5. See No. 306 and n. 3.
6. See ibid, n. 4.
7. See also No. 322.

322. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 7 August 1954

Coded Tel. WIA751; Outg.: 93.01/2211/11

Summary

Eban sends some thoughts regarding his meeting with Dulles.[1] It did not raise any prospect for a dramatic change in the United States' attitude towards Israel. But it should be remembered that in the past whenever closer relationships had developed between Israel and the United States there were at first minor changes and in the course of time they increased. Words should not be scorned since they could develop into action. The secretary of state is dealing with the matter personally and it is essential that it not be passed on to lower echelons. In any event, Israel has no choice but to cling to the branch offered and to enter into discussions on the formulation of Notes. He requests that Sharett inform Dulles accordingly. In the United States, Shiloah is continuing his efforts to pull strings in the White House. He intends to suggest to Silver that he meet with Adams and Dulles.[3,4]

Notes

1. See No. 321.
2. See No. 317 and n. 2.
3. On the actions that accompanied the talks with the secretary of state, see Shiloah's letter to J. Herzog (19 August 1954, 130.19/4374/5). Silver talked with Bedell Smith on 16 August. The latter said that the United States was committed to Israel and would not let any harm befall it, that the Anglo-Egyptian agreement opened the possibility to work for an Israel-Egypt peace agreement, and that it would undertake all the necessary measures to prevent aggression, and would also supply arms to Israel. He also stressed once more that the secretary of state would henceforth be dealing personally with the exchange of Notes. Silver's conversation with Sherman Adams was brief, and he promised to meet with him again. (See Shiloah's telegram to Eban, WIA770, 17 August 1954, 93.01/2210/16.)
4. In an additional telegram, Eban concluded that the transition from the idea of the public statement to the idea of an exchange of Notes was surprising but not necessarily negative, and the significance was that Dulles wished to obtain from Israel some kind of expression of satisfaction, particularly in the light of the approaching elections in the United States, and this fact increased Israel's bargaining power in discussions on the wording. If they reached agreement on the wording of the text, it was clear that the fact would be made known in public, but as Sharett had pointed out, this was not the essential. (Telegram to Sharett, WIA752, 7 August 1954, 93.01/2210/16).

323. M. Dayan (Washington) to the Minister of Defence. 7 August 1954

Coded Tel. 747; Inc.: 130.09/2310/11

Summary

Dayan reports on his visit to the United States[1] and especially on a meeting that he had with some senior officials led by Jernegan in which they spoke about policy issues. Among the main points raised were that peace with Egypt does not necessarily have to be on a formal level. The United States does not accept the demand that the Egyptians have to be compensated for making peace by restriction of immigration to Israel and making border changes. The Americans expressed their disappointment at Israel's reply to the eleven-point plan as they had hope to receive concrete proposals from Israel. They hope that Israel will not raise the issue of free passage through the Suez Canal to Eilat for a while in order to enable Egypt to solve the problem in its own way. They are prepared to forego any intervention and allow them to manage their affairs on their own. They proposed that Israel

return to the Israel-Jordan Mixed Armistice Commission on the occasion of the replacement of Bennike.[3]

Dayan had raised the matter of Hutchison's position and stated firmly that he would not recommend returning to the Armistice Commission while Hutchison was serving there. He proposed arranging meetings with senior Arab commanders such as the commanders of Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, so as to prevent incidents arising out of misunderstandings.[4]

Notes

1. See Nos. 282 and 290.
2. See No. 302.
3. At the beginning of August the U.N. Secretariat announced the ending of General Bennike's tenure as head of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine and his replacement by Major General E.L.M. Burns. General Burns took up his post on 2 September.
4. See No. 330.
5. On 8 July, an Israeli military vehicle ran over a mine near Kisufim and fire was opened on it from an Egyptian position. Three I.D.F. soldiers were wounded. This was followed by exchange of fire with the Egyptian position. In response, on 10 August, a paratrooper unit attacked the Egyptian position, and took control of it for a few hours, killed some of its soldiers and took two of them prisoner. One Israeli soldier was killed and five were wounded. The Armistice Commission which discussed the two incidents on 16 July condemned Egypt for the mining incident and opening fire from the position on 8 July, and Israel for shelling the position during the same incident. It also condemned Israel for the attack on the Egyptian position on 10 July and for taking control of it. The motion condemning Egypt for the same incident, for ambushing an Israeli patrol in Israeli territory and opening fire on it across the lines before the Israeli force had crossed the line, was defeated because of the abstention of the Commission chairman on the grounds of lack of evidence. (See memorandum of A. Shalev on the Commission session on 16 July, 130.02/2438/6.)

324. E. Johnston (Washington) to M. Sharett. 7 August 1954

Notes

1. See No. 283.
2. The appendix is the file, but not printed here.

325. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 8 August 1954

Notes

1. The conversation took place on 6 August.
2. See Nos. 304 and 313.
3. Sharett brought the matter before the government on 9 August and suggested 5 points for the continuation of the talks: 1. Israel opposed any change in the current balance of power. 2. If the United States was determined to supply arms to Egypt, let them also immediately give Israel arms on credit, which they could cancel if it was afterwards decided that the time had come to give arms to Israel. 3. Making economic aid to Egypt conditional on the lifting of the Suez blockade. 4. If an Arab state entered into a defence pact with them, a defence pact between the United States and Israel should be forged, but not necessarily the same defence pact. 5. If after a certain period of time they came to realize that the Arabs were not intent on peace, the situation should be reviewed. (See stenographic record of the government session, 9 August 1954.) On Sharett's conversation with Russell see No. 326.

326. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 10 August 1954

Notes

1. No. 325.
2. See No. 323, n. 3.
3. No. 321.
4. See No. 229.
5. Byroade was appointed United States ambassador to Cairo. He took up his post in March 1955.

   Following the conversation with Russell, Eban commented that: 1. Dulles had not dropped the slightest hint on a commitment to Israel to reduce the supply of arms to the Arabs by agreement with Israel, as Russell had suggested, although he did say that in fact the supply of arms to Egypt would be limited. 2. Dulles had not moralized about demanding good deeds from Israel. 3. The main thrust of Dulles's remarks was that the time was fast approaching for Israel's inclusion in the military assistance plans to the extent of it now being necessary to hold discussions with the president and leaders of Congress and to exchange letters in order to reach mutual understanding on this matter. Eban recommended that the future negotiations be conducted in the presence of Dulles personally, and to have less communication with the regional department personnel. (Telegram WIA761, 10 August 1954, 93.01/2210/16.)

327. East European Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Moscow. 10 August 1954

Coded Tel. 27; Outg.: 130.09/2326/1

Summary

The Division instructs Eliashiv to contact the Soviet authorities concerning cultural ties with their country, following his written request[1] and Levavi's memorandum to the minister of foreign affairs.[2] He should firmly insist on a reciprocal arrangement. When presenting his credentials today,[4] the Soviet ambassador spoke of their intention to send to Israel a delegation of scholars in September and rumours also appeared in the press of the arrival of a dance troupe. The tendency here is to refuse to grant visas unless the principle of reciprocity is maintained.[5]

Notes

1. Reference is to a written proposal for reciprocal visits of scientists and cultural figures presented by Eliashiv in May to "the appropriate Soviet authorities". Eliashiv presented the plan after visiting VOKS, the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, on 28 April, following a previous conversation in January (See No. 33), in order to offer suggestions for visits from Israel. He was informed that VOKS only dealt with proposals from public organizations, whereas regarding governmental proposals he would have to get in touch with the relevant government ministries. Eliashiv presented the proposal after receiving details from Israel on possible exchanges in the sphere of culture and science; while presenting the proposal he stressed the need for reciprocity. (See Eliashiv's telegrams to the M.F.A., 28 April 1954, 9 May 1954, 130.02/2390/10.)
2. Levavi reported on his conversation with Abramov, the Soviet minister, on 18 July, concerning the cultural relations between the two states. Levavi mentioned the contacts in Moscow with VOKS, and requested proposals from them, "since the enterprise must be based on the principle of reciprocity." He stressed that the correct way to develop cultural relations was through governmental channels, where Israel would be represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and asked Abramov to write home about this, so that the matter would get off to a good start. (See Levavi to the minister of foreign affairs, 21 July 1954, 130.02/2390/10.)
3. At the beginning of August an Israeli agricultural delegation headed by the deputy minister of agriculture arrived for a two week visit in the Soviet Union. The delegation, invited by the Soviet minister of agriculture, came on the occasion of the opening of the All-Union agricultural exhibition in Moscow.
4. On the occasion of the raising of the level of representation between the two states from legations to embassies.
5. Eliashiv met with the deputy chairman of VOKS in September and requested an answer to his proposals. He was told that they were not yet able to give him an

answer, but instead added that they were engaged in assembling a delegation to the Israel-USSR Friendship League Conference. Eliashiv replied that in this they were missing the target: friendly relations had to be formed with wide circles of prominent figures in the sciences and the arts in Israel. The League, on the other hand was only representative of a small group in Israel which existed in isolation from the general public. (See Eliashiv to the East European Division, 21 September 1954, 130.02/2390/10.) See also No. 416.

328. Israel Embassy in Paris to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 12 August 1954

Coded Tel. 173; Inc.: 130.09/2345/4

Summary

Conclusions from Chief of the General Staff Dayan's visit to Paris:[1]

The military personnel, Guillaume and Koenig, are well disposed towards Israel, and are willing to go further in providing aid to Israel than their Foreign ministry. But they and of course the politicians too, are not convinced that Israel will not attack its neighbours. They are aware of the identity of interests of France and Israel in the Middle East and North Africa. The argument that a strong Israel will prevent attempts to unite Iraq and Syria has become well rooted. There is a good chance that arms will be provided and there is a willingness to strengthen ties with Israel in non-military spheres also. A good personal relationship was created between the two chiefs of staff.[2]

Notes

1. The official visit of the chief of staff in France (see No. 311) took place on 8–11 August. The French were careful to accord it a purely military character. Dayan met with the French chief of staff Guillaume three times, with the minister of national defence General Koenig, and with the commanders of the army, navy and air force. He also talked with the director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the ceremonial part of his visit he placed a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and was decorated with the medal of the Legion d'Honneur. (See Bendor's report, 13 August 1954, 130.02/2394/5; report of the chief of staff at the government meeting, 22 August 1954.)
2. In a conversation with Najar on 20 August, Ambassador Gilbert said that the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the army personnel had displayed warm feelings for Israel on the occasion of Dayan's visit. This was expressed through the bestowing of the Legion d'Honneur, the highest decoration, which had not been given to any Arab chief of staff. It was his understanding the army people had promised Dayan that he

could rely on it that, should the need arise, the French army would find ways to supply arms to Israel, even over the reservations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (See Najar to the M.F.A., 22 August 1954, 130.02/2413/9.)

329. J. Tsur (Paris) to the West European Division. 13 August 1954

Orig.: 130.10/2520/9

Summary

Tsur reports on Easterman's meeting with Bourguiba. He asked about the attitude of the Tunisian national movement towards the Jews of Tunisia. Bourguiba replied that his movement regarded the Jews with tolerance and esteem. When the independent state of Tunisia is established it will not discriminate against the Jews and will assign them representation in the government. Easterman replied that he had no doubt about Bourguiba's attitude but he was concerned about that of the younger members of the party[1] and whether they would follow his lead. Bourguiba replied that he would be prepared to ensure that this would be incorporated into the constitution of Tunisia and to pass laws that could not be changed. They also discussed Tunisia's foreign policy and its attitude to Israel. Bourguiba said that he intended to demand that Tunisia join the Arab League, and he was certain that this would benefit the West as well as Israel. As for Israel, he said that while he recognized the right of the Jews to national existence, he objected to the State of Israel and immigration to it, for he considered it part of the process of Western colonization and the occupation of an Arab country. However, he and his party were realistic and they knew they would have to face reality.

They also discussed the situation in Morocco. He said that in contrast to Tunisia, he was apprehensive about the fate of the Jews of Morocco.[3]

Notes

1. The Neo-Destour (new constitution) Party was founded in 1934 with the aim of achieving Tunisian independence, and had served as the backbone of the nationalist governments established in Tunisia since 1950.
2. The Istiqlal (independence) Party the main nationalist party in Morocco, was established in 1944 and had since then striven for Moroccan independence.
3. This document provoked reactions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Rafael complained that Easterman had not made the attitude of the Neo-Destour towards

Israel the focus of his talk, and as a result Bourguiba had gained the impression that international Jewry was interested in the legal position of Tunisian Jews but not in its leaders' attitude towards Israel. In his view, Easterman should have made it clear to Bourguiba that the Jewish people's attitude to the Tunisian independence movement would be determined by its leaders' attitude towards Israel. (See Rafael's memorandum to Shek, 24 August 1954, 130.02/2388/7.) Sharett had complained apparently to Easterman that he did not raise the question of emigration. Easterman replied that he raised the question in a conversation he had had the following day with Bourguiba's son, and was told that there would be complete freedom of emigration, including to Israel, but it was very likely that the Tunisian government would not agree, for economic reasons, to mass emigration. (See Easterman to Avner, for transmission to Sharett, 8 September 1954, 130.02/2398/2.)

330. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 17 August 1954

Notes

1. See No. 323, paragraph 6.
2. See No. 341.

331. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to U Nu (Rangoon). 17 August 1954

Notes

1. The reference is to a high-ranking military and civilian delegation, the second official delegation from Burma, which arrived in Israel in the second half of June, with the aim of learning about the national service program current in Israel, with a view to launching a similar scheme in Burma. The delegation was divided into study groups, according to the following subjects: the military group, housing, road building, vocational education, industry, military training, the air force and navy. The delegation was guests of the I.D.F. and the Asia Division of the M.F.A. In his letter to Sharett, U Nu expressed the hope the visit would strengthen still further the friendly ties between the two states and that Israel would send a similar delegation to Burma in the near future. He also noted that he hoped that he would be able in the near future to realize his desire to visit Israel. (See U Nu to the prime minister, 17 June 1954, 43.07/5569/14; correspondence in File 130.02/2394/25; D. Hacohen, *Burmese Diary*, pp. 220–221, 232, 238 [Hebrew].)
2. U Nu received this letter via the delegation that returned to Burma. In his letter of reply he thanked Sharett for the successful visit and for the agreement reached in the course of it for the dispatch to Burma of Israeli experts in connection with the

development projects in the sphere of military industries, the establishment of a paratrooper training school and an agricultural training school. He added that he hoped that he would be able to visit Israel soon, and in regard to the matter of opening a legation in Israel, he wrote that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was looking into the matter together with the question of opening a legation in Egypt. (See U Nu to Sharett, 19 September 1954, 130.02/2415/22.)

And in fact, as a consequence of the agreement, in September military and agricultural experts went out to Burma. There were also orders for military equipment and the start of relations with civilian industries. On 26 November and on 26 December, U Nu announced to Sharett the decision to open a legation in Israel shortly to be headed, for financial and administrative reasons, by a chargé d'affaires. The Burmese legation was eventually opened in May 1955, and U Nu's official visit to Israel took place at the beginning of June 1955. (See U Nu to Sharett, 26 November 1954, ibid.; memorandum of D. Lewin to the minister of foreign affairs, 26 December 1954, ibid.; U Nu to Sharett, 26 December 1954, 130.02/2386/25.)

332. Inter-Office Consultations (Jerusalem, 16 and 18 August 1954)

Copy: 130.20/2488/6

Summary

Consultations were held at the initiative of the director-general of the Prime Minister's Office. They were attended by ambassadors Eban and Eilat, the directors-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of Defence and senior personnel of these ministries.

The consultations dealt with current political and security issues with the purpose of putting a number of alternatives before the government, without necessarily reaching any definite conclusions.

The consultation opened with the presentation of agreed premises and proposals as follows: under the present circumstances there is no way of preventing political and military ties between the United States and the Arab countries. However, it may be possible for Israel to take action to reduce the supply of arms and the types to be consigned. Therefore, the principle of balance of power should be adhered to as determined by the Western Powers in the past, and expressed in the 1950 Declaration. The West should be appraised of the dangers in the new situation, which upsets the balance of power and undermines the stability of the region. Israel's connections with Western countries as well as with the United States, should be expanded, especially as regards purchase of arms.

Negotiations with the United States were discussed. It was agreed that these should continue, because if Israel were to withdraw, this would have a negative effect on the willingness of supporters of Israel, Jewish and non-Jewish, to continue their efforts on behalf of the state.

The issue of military aid to Israel was discussed in detail. One opinion expressed was that this aid, even if it were to be received, would be restricted to 8–10 million dollars at the most, and it was not worth taking on the restrictions and debts they would be required to enter into. Therefore, no requests should be submitted for aid, and if any proposals are made they should be accepted only if substantial and serious. Another opinion voiced was that in any event Israel has already submitted requests for aid on numerous occasions. The receipt of aid is of political value, and acceptance does not prevent purchase of arms elsewhere. It was also stated that even if aid would at first be limited, there was always the possibility that it would be increased in due course.

Regarding the methods to be followed in the political campaign in the United States, two proposals were developed, similar to each other on many points, but differing in detail and formulation. The principle of emphatic opposition to the arming of the Arab states, and the demand to maintain the balance of power should be stressed. So long as political efforts continued, no action should be taken that could present Israel as infringing upon international law, while on the other hand the fact that the Arab states are violators of this law should be stressed. If the method of utilizing public and diplomatic pressure in the United States does not succeed, steps will have to be taken in Israel to bring the seriousness of the situation before the public. These should include public discussion of the need to increase the security budget, call up of reserves etc.[1]

Note

1. The list is on file, but was not printed here. The consultations were attended by the directors-general of the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence, ambassadors Eban and Elath, senior officials in these ministries and high-ranking I.D.F. officers.

   Addenda to this summary of the consultation, see stenographic records of the director-general of the Ministry of Defence, Sh. Peres, of this consultation (25 August 1954, I.M.D.E.A., 893/72/1230), and the memorandum of I. Harel, in charge of the Security Services, and Sharett's comments at the end of it (18 August 1954, 130.02/2414/28). A further consultation see No. 334.

333. W. Eytan [Jerusalem] to the Chairman of the Palestine Conciliation Commission (New York). 19 August 1954

Notes

1. No. 226.
2. This refers to a memorandum submitted by Eban to the Palestine Conciliation Commission on 2 June 1952 – see Vol. 7, No. 177.
3. The decision to inform the Conciliation Commission of willingness to resume the discussion on condition that the representatives of the beneficiaries negotiate with Israel directly was taken after secret negotiations conducted between the Israeli representatives and the representatives of the General Congress of Palestine Refugees in June, and a direct appeal of the Congress representatives to the Conciliation Commission requesting to arrange negotiations between them and Israel following these contacts. On these discussions see the correspondence in File 130.15/3738/1.
4. This letter was delivered to the Conciliation Commission in New York on 24 August. See also Nos. 353, 386 (Editorial Note) and 447.

334. Consultations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[1] 20 August 1954

Stencilled copy: 130.20/2488/6

Summary

The document contains the main points of Israel's political plan of action: In the United States, an ideological campaign will be mounted, the thrust of which will be the continued objection to supplying arms to the Arabs which does not serve the declared purpose of restraining communism, but rather increases instability in the region. On the other hand, the argument should be made that the interests of the West lie precisely with Israel or at least with relations on the same level as with the Arabs. The abandonment of Israel should be condemned and the Department of State's evaluation of the imminent danger of a communist attack should be questioned. Furthermore, an extensive public campaign should be launched among American Jewry and the U.S. public at large.

Together with the ideological and public campaign, political activity must be continued. A letter should be sent to Dulles containing the following points: an argument that United States' policy is undermining Israel's security; a demand to prevent aggression in the region; insistence on

non-violation of the balance of power existing in the Middle East and the provision of military aid to Israel; a request that the United States undertake to maintain the balance of power and forthwith sign an agreement for the provision of military aid. The letter would be followed by oral negotiations, and among the points to be raised will be to stress the lifting of the blockade of the Suez Canal and the Straits of Eilat.[2]

As regards Britain, it was decided that a Note should be sent in reply to Selwyn Lloyd's comments in his meeting with Avner.[4] The Note should ask whether the British are prepared to put their oral undertakings in writing, especially those giving actual guarantees that the bases in Suez would be used only for the defence of the region. An explicit undertaking is required regarding freedom of navigation, and a vehement protest should be made against item 4[6] in the draft agreement with Egypt giving recognition to the Arab League's collective security pact.

In the light of the undermining of Israel's situation in the region, ways should be sought to strengthen and expand ties with friendly nations throughout the world. Ties with France are of the utmost importance and the possibility of cooperation with the Balkan Pact[7] should be examined, as well as ties with Asian countries.

At present, and until further basic considerations are made, all demonstrations of the use of force must be avoided. This does not include attempts to bring a vessel through the Suez Canal, but if it is detained, a political-information campaign should be mounted immediately. The date for implementation will not be before the end of September.[8]

Notes

1. The consultations took place on 16 and 17 August, headed by the minister of foreign affairs. See also the inter-ministerial consultations that took place concurrently, No. 332.
2. See No. 339.
3. See No. 321 and n. 4.
4. On the conversation with Avner see No. 285. The letter delivered to the British – see No. 376.
5. See No. 295 and n. 1.
6. This paragraph states that in the case of attack by foreign country on Egypt or another country signatory to the Collective Security Pact of the member states of the Arab League, or Turkey, Egypt would grant Britain all facilities to ready the Suez base in a state of preparedness for war and to utilize it in the most efficient manner. (See Heads of Agreement, 27 July 1954, 130.02/2409/9.)
7. See No. 304, n. 7, No. 348.
8. Addenda to this document, including details of the remarks of the participants, see in File 130.20/2488/6 and memorandum on the remarks of J. Herzog at the meeting with the minister, 16 August 1954, 130.20/2488/6.

335. J. Tsur (Paris) to M. Sharett. 20 August 1954

Orig.: 43/5563/4006

Summary

Tsur reports to Sharett on the results of consultations concerning North Africa held in Lucerne on 17–18 August. The conclusions also concern the Ministry of Finance, and he requests that they be brought to the attention of the minister of finance, Eshkol.

The first session of the consultations was devoted to political activities and coordination between the various organizations, the Jewish Agency and Israeli government departments active in these countries. In the course of the deliberations, the representatives of the World Jewish Congress reported on their conversations with Tunisian national leaders.[2] Both these representatives and those of the Jewish Agency are convinced that there is no future for the continued presence of Jews in Tunisia and Morocco, and the undertakings given by nationalist leaders to the Jews with whom they spoke were only to appease them and gain world support.

The main organizational conclusion in these consultations was that a central authority for matters relating to North Africa should be created with its base in Paris, made up of representatives of the Israeli government and of the Jewish Agency. This body would coordinate all matters relating to immigration, training, transfer of capital, education, etc. The World Jewish Congress representatives agreed to cooperate with this body, although not to participate in it.

The second session of the consultation discussed mechanisms and methods of rescuing the property of the Jews of Morocco and Tunisia. It was agreed that two banks, Bank Leumi in Israel and the Swiss-Israel Bank, together with the Jews of North Africa, would set up a framework for the transfer of funds from North Africa to accounts in Switzerland or directly to Israel. It was also agreed to examine the possibility of establishing a trust company that would deal with the liquidation of the immovable property of North African Jews in those or other countries. In Tsur's estimation, these consultations constituted a step forward towards a solution with a good chance of success.[4]

Notes

1. The institute for coordination between the Jewish Agency and the Israeli government on matters of immigration – see No. 259 and notes.
2. See No. 329 and Tsur's letter to the West European Division, 13 August 1954, 130.10/2520/8. In the letter Tsur reported on the increasing tension in North Africa, on the first molestations of Moroccan Jews and on nervousness and anxiety among the Jews of Tunisia. All of this against the background of lack or organization and coordination of the activity being carried out in those states. He warned of the imminent danger to Israel's activities as a result of the independent intervention of international Jewish organizations competing with each other, and demanded that a uniform political and organizational approach be adopted for the Israeli institutions and the Jewish organizations active in the region.
3. See Tsur to the West European Division, 20 August 1954, 93.02/163/13.
4. Even before reading this letter, Najar reacted to some of the problems raised by Tsur. The policy of Israel was to find a way to prevent foreign intervention, particularly by the Arab League, in the dialogue between France and North Africa, and to prevent Morocco and Tunisia becoming satellites of the Arab League. There was room for cooperation between Israel, the Jewish Agency and the World Jewish Congress and the Alliance, but in view of the importance of relations with France he would be wary of including the Joint Distribution Committee, the American Jewish Committee, or the Board of Deputies of British Jews in this group. A distinction had to be made between two types of problems: Relations with the French authorities or North African political bodies, which since they came under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had to be under the direct control of the ambassador in Paris; on the other hand, the organization of activity among the Jews in North Africa and their immigration and absorption in Israel should remain in the hands of the Jewish Agency and the other government ministries. In this area, progress had been achieved as a result of the activity of the Coordination Institute and the new arrangement regarding emissaries. (Letter to Tsur, 23 August 1954, 93.02/163/14.)

   After reading the letter, Najar experienced several doubts. In discussions held in Europe not a word had been said about what the North African Jews themselves felt about their future. The thoughts about the liquidation of the Jewish communities in North Africa arose from the assumption that the French were set on winding up their rule there, but it was clear that it was impossible to conduct negotiations with the French on such a basis. Negotiations with the French prime minister must not be entrusted to Nahum Goldmann; this was the sphere of activity of the ambassador in Paris, and the concentration of the political activity would be a decisive factor in ensuring Israel's control of the activities of the Jewish organizations and the Jewish Agency. (His letter to Tsur, 30 August 1954, 130.02/2388/6.)

336. Extract from a Speech of Sharett at the Mapai Conference. (Tel Aviv, 21 August 1954)

Information to Israel Missions Abroad, No. 925: 130.02/2451/18

Summary

Sharett refers to Israel's undertaking to pay compensation to Arab refugees for their lands.[1] He points out that Israel had made this commitment at a specific time when a specific situation had existed. Israel is still committed to this, but it will not stand forever. The other side had had a number of opportunities and a number of proposals had been put forward regarding the refugees, but they were not taken up. They should be very careful not to miss the opportunity to take advantage of these undertakings. It should also be understood that these repayment commitments cannot be considered while the Arabs keep on harming Israel by continuing the maritime blockade, the boycott, and other machinations. One should remember that this land did not come into Israel's possession on the open market, but as the result of a bloody war, a war of aggression and invasion, which was most costly to Israel. All this will be taken into account when the time comes to settle the matter.

Notes

1. Israel had made this commitment on various occasions, and it had also been called upon to do so several times recently. In a letter to the Conciliation Commission of 7 July 1953, Eban had reiterated this commitment and announced that Israel was prepared to discuss the issue in practical terms. This letter was in answer to requests from the Commission following the transfer in 1953 of the abandoned Arab lands from the Custodian of Absentee Properties to the Development Authority, and the protests of the Arab states over this. (The letter and additional correspondence, in File 130.02/2402/2.)
2. This refers to a recommendation by President Truman in August 1945, to permit the immigration of 100,000 Jewish displaced persons from Europe. This recommendation came following a survey by the President's emissary, Earl Harrison, in the D.P. camps in Europe.

337. R. Shiloah (Washington) to A. Eban. 24 August 1954

Coded Tel. WIA791; Outg.: 93.01/2210/16

Summary

Reports on Blaustein's meeting with Murphy, who reiterated the secretary of state's statement expressing United States' intention to maintain the balance of power in the region. He repeated the argument that Israel was stronger than the Arab states, but at the same time they were aware of the psychological effect of the Anglo-Egyptian agreement, and were examining the situation in the light of this. As for the blockade of shipping, the Department of State's decision to demand emphatically that the Egyptians cease this blockade was still in effect, and they would approach Egypt directly on the matter. Blaustein's impression from the meeting was that the final decision would largely depend on the evaluation of the balance of military forces in the region.

338. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 27 August 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2415/1

Summary

Reports on a wide-ranging discussion with Russell about the aims and actions of the United States concerning an arrangement between Israel and Egypt.

Russell began by stating that during the past year, Naguib, Nasser and other Egyptian government officials had told United States representatives in Cairo that they would be willing to come to an arrangement with Israel, on condition that the United States would assist them to conclude the accord with Britain. The United States government considered these as moral and political commitments, and had instructed its representative in Egypt that as soon as negotiations with the British are concluded to demand that this commitment be honoured. They also raised the demand to lift the maritime blockade. The Egyptian leaders had replied that they required time to prepare public opinion. Russell added that practical results would be seen within three months, first of all regarding the maritime blockade. As part of this process, the United States considers financial aid to Egypt to be of the

utmost importance. The stability of that country and the future of the present regime are dependent upon this aid, and the United States intends to take action to supply it immediately.

Rafael replied that Israel welcomes any practical steps by the United States to establish contacts between Israel and Egypt. It hoped that the United States would devote its attention to the need for direct negotiations between the two countries. However, being aware of the situation in Egypt and the attitudes of its leaders, Israel insists that no financial aid be provided until positive proof is provided of Egypt's willingness to take steps to establish relations with Israel. It believed that making the granting of financial aid to Egypt conditional upon coming to an arrangement with Israel would bring about results. Russell agreed that Israel's argument was justified and undertook to put this view to the Department of State in Washington.

Prior to ending the meeting, Russell told him in confidence that the secretary of state was drawing up a plan to guarantee Israel's security, with practical steps to be taken, and not just reassuring statements. It may well be that the approval of Congress will have to be obtained, and thus some time will be needed to have the plan approved.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 333.
2. This information was conveyed in the meeting between Russell and the prime minister – see No. 343. See also *FRUS 1952-54*, Vol. IX (part 1), Nos. 873–871, 867.

339. M. Sharett [Jerusalem] to J.F. Dulles (Washington). 27 August 1954

Notes

1. Sharett was interested that the message should be transmitted to Washington immediately, in a telegram via the American embassy, however J. Herzog attached importance that the letter being sent would be signed by Sharett, so that: "(a) from the formal standpoint a personal letter will be sent from you to Dulles," and (b) to ensure that "the little foxes cannot do sabotage and prevent it reaching Dulles". And in fact the signed letter was sent to the embassy in Tel Aviv in order that its contents would be cabled that same day, in addition to its being sent by mail. (See Herzog to the minister of foreign affairs, 27 August 1954, 130.20/2480/5.)
2. On the conversation between Eban and Dulles see No. 359.

340. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 27 August 1954

Coded Tel. TNW537; Outg.: 130.09/2312/8

Summary

At a meeting between Russell, Eytan and the chief of the general staff, the latter stated that Israel would be ready to set up a framework for direct contact and telephone communications between local commanders in Jerusalem and in the Gaza Strip.[1] Russell replied that the Egyptians were insisting that a United Nations observer be present at such meetings. The chief of staff replied that Israel did not object to the presence of an observer, but the need to have him there would make ineffectual the main purpose of the meetings, viz. dealing with situations rapidly before they develop into full-scale crises. The Israeli representatives also stressed that the intention was to come to an arrangement and not an agreement, because past experience has shown that an agreement quickly degenerates into a political issue. Israel's agreement was also passed on to Burns who expressed his satisfaction.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 330.
2. On the introductory visit of General Burns, the new chief of staff of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine, to Chief of Staff Dayan, see the report of A. Shalev, 26 August 1954, 130.02/2425/9. The subsequent contacts regarding the Local Commanders' Agreement see No. 352, n. 2.

341. G. Avner (London) to W. Eytan. 27 August 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2412/29

Summary

Avner refers to the British Ambassador's farewell meeting with Eytan.[1] His comments provided further proof of the evaluation of British policy towards Israel, which is currently bound up with Britain's relationships with the Arabs. He does not accept the ambassador's argument that the British had not made progress with Israel in the area of military cooperation because of American pressure. A simple chronological examination of the matter reveals that the British change of policy had come prior to the change of

government in the United States. The change in American policy had only led to coordination between the policies of the two countries, whereas in the past Americans had restrained British policy towards Israel. He does not define the relations between Britain and Israel as good. It is true that diplomatic protocol exists, but there is not one practical matter in which Israel enjoys the political support of Britain. He therefore does not see the arrival of the new ambassador as an opportunity for a change. In his opinion, Israel should continue to look to its own interests – the development of its economy and society, to ward off dangers, and to wait for better days in relations with the major Powers.

Note

1. Eytan reported a conversation he had with the outgoing British ambassador, Evans. Evans said that he had done his best to improve relations between Israel and Britain but could not go beyond the limits set by the American policy, which obligated Britain. He intimated that there would not be a follow-up to the visit of the British military mission in 1952, not so much because of American pressure, as the British feeling that the forging of close military ties was not to the liking of the Americans. (130.13/2595/8.)

342. Note from the British Embassy in Tel Aviv to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 30 August 1954

Note

1. The British had imposed an embargo on the sale of arms to Egypt in October 1951, in reaction to Egypt's unilateral cancellation of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936. The Ministry of Defence spokesman announced that the lifting of the embargo had given Egypt an opening to demand the immediate dispatch of 16 Centurion tanks, whose dispatch had been held up with the imposition of the embargo.

343. United States Division (Jerusalem) to R. Shiloah (Washington). 31 August 1954

Notes

1. No. 326.
2. Telegram of Rafael to Shiloah, 26 August 1954, 130.09/2310/7, and in it a summary of the conversation detailed in No. 338.

344. J. Tsur (Paris) to the West European Division. 1 September 1954

Coded Tel. 605; Inc.: 130.02/2451/5

Summary

Tsur reports a proposal drawn up by the British and French to demilitarize the Holy Places in Jerusalem. The suggestion deals mainly with those sites under Jordanian rule and those in Israeli territory apparently include only the Church of the Dormition and Notre Dame. It is not intended to infringe on the sovereignty of either country or to introduce international forces, but solely to demilitarize the area and perhaps give the implementation over to the United Nations. He was told that the advantages of the plan for Israel would be that the idea of internationalization of the area would be rejected once and for all and that it would perhaps make possible direct contacts with Jordan. It could also remove the obstacle blocking the transfer of foreign embassies to Jerusalem. The reactions of Jordan and the Vatican are not yet known and Israel's reaction is requested; if completely negative they will abandon the idea.

Tsur points out that the plan is worthy of serious consideration. First of all, it is no different to proposals submitted by Israel to the United Nations in the past and secondly, Jordan would probably refuse, and then Israel's tactical position would be better. Thirdly, this would improve Israel's standing in France. Tsur will endeavour to obtain further details, but in the meantime the French do not object to discussing it with Gilbert.[1]

Note

1. In his talk with Sharett the following day, 2 September, Gilbert explained that France had taken this initiative after the last flare-up in Jerusalem had prompted the Vatican to launch a new campaign to revive the idea of full internationalization. The appeals by Vatican representatives to various governments had caused them distress. Everyone realized that the idea of full internationalization was dead and buried but felt that an interim solution should be sought that would reassure the Vatican. The result was that the consuls of France, Britain and the United States in the Old City of Jerusalem had drawn up a demilitarization plan that would apply to a contiguous area on both sides of the city, but mainly in the Eastern part, where there were holy sites and religious institutions. In this area the presence of military forces and heavy weapons would be banned and only police forces would be allowed. Gilbert wishes to reduce the obstacles for Israel and therefore wished to know what it preferred with regard to the two questions that remained open: who would present the plan, the U.N. secretary-general, the Head of the Truce Supervision

Organization or the Powers, and who would supervise the demilitarization, the U.N. or a joint committee of the two sides?

Sharett replied that he preferred that the plan should be permanently discarded, but if it was decided upon, he would prefer that it be presented by France, and as for the supervision – it was preferable to have Israel-Jordanian supervision. (See Sharett's talk with Gilbert, 6 September 1954, 130.02/2443/11; Najar's memorandum on his talk with the French ambassador, 7 September 1954, 130.02/2413/9.)

345. R. Shiloah (Washington) to J. Herzog. 2 September 1954

Orig.: 130.20/2475/3

Summary

Shiloah notes down a number of summaries and evaluation of Israel's foreign policy, especially as regards its relations with the United States.

The United States considers the Middle East one of the main areas of the Cold War. Its main consideration is to prevent Soviet penetration into the area and to organize the region for defence within the framework of the Western world. The Soviet Union is being assisted in its penetration by feelings of suspicion and animosity of the peoples of the region towards the former colonialist nations. The United States, which is replacing these countries, needs to be careful not to be labelled as colonialist. Hence the pressure on the allies (England and France) to yield even on vital issues. This trend is assisted by the anti-colonialist state of mind prevalent among the American public.

At first the Americans entrusted the organization of regional defence to Britain. When the British failed, as well as for other reasons, the Americans came to the conclusion that they would have to take the initiative and assume leadership. The Americans do not consider the Middle East important for its military potential, but rather for its geographic position and its oil resources. For this reason, their efforts are in the direction of appeasement and the creation of a tranquil atmosphere in the region, even if this requires postponement of the establishment of organizations and military bases.

These premises dictate relations between Israel and the United States, which are subject to security requirements determined by the United States. Public opinion regarding Israel in the United States is diverse and varied. There are those who consider Israel as an alien entity and hindrance in the region, and others who admire it as a constructive factor, a stronghold of democracy and a champion of liberty. But both camps consider that in the

light of the international situation and the security needs of the United States, any distinctly pro-Israel manifestations should be kept modest for a specified period, and on the other hand, friendship towards the Arabs should be demonstrated. In their opinion, Israel is strong enough to manage for a while in such a situation, since in the long run it will be to Israel's benefit. Added to this is the undisputed assumption obtaining in government circles in the United States that Israel has marked military superiority over the Arab states, both individually and collectively.

Recent political developments in the Middle East, activities by Israel and its supporters, forthcoming elections to Congress and the deterioration of the Arab-Israel conflict have led to second thoughts by the secretary of state and the political leadership. The ambassador's two meetings with the secretary of state[4] have also contributed to this change. He is now seeking ways to reassure Israel. In Shiloah's opinion, Israel must exploit this opportunity, but any action it takes must include a positive attitude to the defence requirements of the United States and the West. Any line taken that negates American interests in the region is bound to fail. He is thus not in agreement with the decisions taken at consultations held in Israel, at the time of the ambassador's visit.[1] While these decisions call for the continuation of protests against the arming of the Arab states, they refrain from raising clear and public demands for the arming of Israel. In his opinion, Israel should endeavour to forge military ties with the United States, even if at first only on a restricted basis.

On the other hand, he is not convinced that the time is right for a new offensive for peace with the Arabs. The United States will not at present support any policy of pressure on the Arabs, and if it becomes involved in mediation between the parties, Israel will suffer. It is essential that tension and anxiety in Israel's foreign relations be avoided as far as possible and they should concentrate on strengthening Israel's economic and security situation.[6]

Notes

1. See Nos. 332, 334.
2. See No. 149.
3. In May 1953 - see Vol. 8, No. 206 (Editorial Note).
4. Nos. 312 and 320.
5. A memorandum of this kind has not been traced, but in a detailed letter to Teddy Kollek (31 August 1954, 43.04/7226/4), similar to the letter here, Shiloah warned against too great a reliance on Britain and France, since in the final analysis these two states were prepared to take issue with the United States only in vital matters, whereas in secondary matters they made great efforts to cooperate with it, even when this involved very considerable concessions on their part.

6. In the same letter to Kollek (see n. 5 above) Shiloah recommended that for the time being they should strive for maximum calming of the Arab-Israeli conflict, to avoid incidents, to improve relations with the U.N. personnel, to avoid bringing disputes before the Security Council, and not to compel the Western Powers to intervene in disputes between Israel and the Arabs, since in most cases their inclination would be to avoid reaching decisions or else to make decisions against Israel.

346. G. Avner (London) to Y. Tekoah. 3 September 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2399/1

Summary

Avner reacts to Tekoah's letter of 31 August regarding reprisal actions.[1] He accepts the value of the explanations given by Tekoah but points out that the fact still remains that the picture being received of late in London indicates strong Israeli pressure on the borders, especially the Jordanian border. Since the embassy has received no instructions as to how to explain the operations for what they are, namely acts of reprisal, the impression remains that Israel is exacerbating the situation. He proposes to bring to the knowledge of the Western Powers some of the explanations and arguments indicated in Tekoah's letter, clandestinely of course, and believes that this will have a positive effect, or at least better than discordant pronouncements which are ignored. Perhaps it would be best not to react at all, as had been the case in a certain situation. To sum up, he proposes to modify the tone of publicity. If in fact the majority of the reprisal actions on Israel's border are legally and factually justified, then such justification should be given, and at all events they should refrain from vociferous propaganda, of which no one takes any notice.[5]

Notes

1. Tekoah replied to Avner's arguments (see Avner's letter of 20 August 1954, 130.02/2399/1) that lately the impression had been created that Israel was conducting a policy of provocation on the border, including training exercises and manoeuvres of military forces close to the border, and with excessive reaction to incidents. He explained that the patrols along the armistice line were designed to provide an answer to one of the most serious security problems - encroachment for cultivating and pasturing, as a result of the owners having been separated from their lands by the terms of the Armistice Agreement. Incidents of a different kind arose from the Jordanian opposition to the expansion of the cultivated territories of the

Israeli border settlements to land which they still regarded as theirs. The importance of these patrols was great, especially in sparsely settled areas on the Israeli side where the numerous incursions into them represented de facto annexation of the territories to Jordan. As to the holding of training exercises close to the border, this was dictated by the fact that there were few training areas inside Israel so that the I.D.F. was interested in the appearance of army units precisely in those areas where no regular Israeli presence existed. (The letter dated 31 August 1954, in File 93.04/39/21.)

2. Yusef Haykal, Jordan's ambassador in London.
3. See No. 164, n. 1.
4. On the eve of 15 August the I.D.F. blew up the main water plant in the Gaza Strip, near the city of Gaza. In the operation the machinist was killed and an Egyptian soldier wounded. This operation was preceded by the blowing up of a water main to the northern Negev, near Nir Am, on the night between 11–12 August. The Armistice Commission condemned Israel for blowing up the water plant; Israel's proposal of a resolution condemning Egypt for blowing up the main was not passed because of the abstention of the chairman, who argued that there was insufficient evidence. (See Shalev's report on the Commission's sessions on 17 August, 130.02/2438/8.)
5. Avner once again addressed the issue of reprisal raids in another letter to Tekoah (10 September 1954, 130.02/2439/9). He agreed that the reality of the situation at times made these raids unavoidable, but argued that from political considerations also care should be taken that the dimensions of the operation should not be in excess of the amount of damage caused. From the public relations standpoint, he insisted on the need to explain the multiplicity of clashes with the regular Jordanian forces, when it was a question of infiltrations on the one hand and patrols and reprisal raids on the other.

347. M. Gazit (London) to G. Rafael. 3 September 1954

Orig.: 130.15/3745/3

Summary

Gazit reports on a proposal made in a conversation with Tripp to establish direct and secret political contacts between Israel and Jordan.[1] Tripp, director of the Israeli desk in the British Foreign Office, proposed using their ambassador in Jordan to make this connection. The problems that concern the British and probably the Jordanians, are (a) to what extent the Israelis are interested; (b) will the Israelis agree to hold meetings that are not based on a detailed agenda; (c) maintaining secrecy; (d) would Israel want to hold a number of meetings or ongoing clandestine talks; (e) what would be the relation of these contacts to other contacts (the Armistice Commission, when Israel returns to it, agreements between local commanders, when these are renewed).[2]

Notes

1. This refers to a report of a conversation Gazit had on 2 September with Tripp, who was in charge of Israeli affairs in the British Foreign Office (the report, dated 3 September, is filed under 130.15/3745/3). Tripp suggested establishing secret contacts between Israeli and Jordanian representatives, and suggested that the British ambassador in Amman would speak with the Jordanian prime minister on the matter. The idea of establishing secret contacts with Jordan was raised again in July in a talk between Avner and Falla, of the British Foreign Office, who wanted to persuade Israel of the sincerity of Jordan's efforts to maintain quiet on the border. Falla hoped that if Israel understood the difficulties faced by the Jordanians, it would agree to cooperate by the same means that Jordan could adopt. The proposal was conveyed to Jordan (See Avner to Rafael, 5 August 1954, 130.15/3745/3.)
2. Rafael raised the questions before the minister of foreign affairs in a memorandum of 12 September 1954 (93.04/41/14). He approved of the contact according to (a), he agreed not to make the meetings conditional according to (b), to pledge to secrecy according to (c) and was in favour of a constant covert contact according to paragraph (d). On (e) he replied that the meetings would be above and outside the existing frameworks and at a responsible and competent political level. Sharett's instructions were written in the margins of the memorandum: "We must answer in the affirmative without any hesitation, and keep the matter a close secret between us until we see what will come out of it."Directives were sent to Gazit to act accordingly (16 September 1954, ibid.), but even prior to that Tripp informed him that his superiors had told him that the matter was not practical. (Gazit to the British Commonwealth Division, 17 September 1954, ibid.)

348. E. Yoran (Belgrade) to M. Sharett. 3 September 1954

Coded Tel. 253; Outg.: 130.09/2298/8

Summary

Yoran reports on a conversation with Tito on the occasion of his farewell visit to the Yugoslav President. Yoran hinted at the problem of the arming of the Arabs and stated that Israel might be faced with the necessity to defend its sovereignty. He stressed Israel's appreciation of the principles behind the Balkan Alliance,[1] namely: sovereignty and the equality of small nations. He pointed out the role the Alliance might play in guaranteeing peace in the Middle East. In keeping with directives from the Ministry, he spoke about the possibility of Israel's joining the Alliance.[2] Tito replied that he was unable to give a positive or negative answer at present since he did not know the current Anglo-American attitude and their future policy. Thus it would be best to wait, though he stressed his amicable feelings and desire to be of help to Israel. He was certainly prepared to discuss the matter with the

members of the Alliance. Yoran states that he would follow up this conversation to clarify details.[3]

Notes

1. This refers to the alliance signed in June 1954 between Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia. The signatory states committed themselves to political cooperation and to mutual assistance for a period of twenty years.
2. In this telegram, dated 30 August, Eytan instructed Yoran, the representative in Yugoslavia, to ask Tito if Israel could rely on Yugoslavia's support if it wished to be incorporated in the Balkan Alliance. (130.09/2298/7).
3. For a detailed report on this conversation, see Yoran to the director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 5 September 1954, 130.02/2381/20. Following the conversation, two conversations were held with Kardelj, the Yugoslav deputy prime minister. In the first conversation with Yoran he said that although it was at this stage difficult to talk about a formal agreement, nevertheless cooperation between the two states should be encouraged and to let things develop. (See Yoran's telegram, 15 September 1954, 130.09/2298/8.) In the second conversation, with Levavi, the new Israeli representative, Kardelj said that following an internal discussion, they had come to the conclusion that because of the Arab issue and the Western plans for a regional defence organization, it was not now possible practically to incorporate Israel into the Balkan Alliance. (Telegram from Levavi to the M.F.A., No. 278, 17 November 1954, ibid.)

349. Y. Shimoni (Washington) to the United States Division. 4 September 1954

Notes

1. This is a reference to the two decisions condemning Israel adopted by the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission on 2 and 3 September, in the absence of the Israeli delegation. In the first decision, on 2 September, Israel was condemned for having crossed the armistice line on 30 August and for a shooting incident in the vicinity of the villages of Khirbet Sikka and Deir al Assel in the Hebron area, the killing of a Jordanian soldier and the wounding of three others. In reply to the claim of the I.D.F. spokesman that the incident had been started by firing from Jordanian territory at an I.D.F. unit which was training close to the line, the Commission called on the Chief of Staff of the Truce Supervision Organization to demand that Israel stop conducting training and manoeuvres close to the border. Burns appealed to the Israeli government in a letter to Sharett of 5 September, and even indicated a distance of 2 kilometers from the line as being a safe distance. (The letter in File 130.02/2429/7.)

In the second decision, on 3 September, Israel was condemned for having crossed the line and opening fire on the night between September 1 and 2 on the village of Beit Liqya in the area of Latrun. The operation in Beit Liqya came in retaliation for the murder of a guard in Ramat Raziel on 28 August. In the reprisal raid an Israeli force of battalion strength was involved, and on the Jordanian side two soldiers were killed, five were wounded and three abducted and brought to Israeli territory. (See the Armistice Commission decision of 3 September, annexed to the report of General Burns to the U.N. secretary-general on the Beit Liqya incident, U. N. Document S/3290, also in File 130.02/2429/7.)

2. According to the conversation as recorded in the American documentation they had not intended to make it public, unless they were asked about it at the news conference slated for 7 September. In fact the content of the appeal to Israel was made public at the news conference, and according to the Reuters news agency the Department of State spokesman said that the United States had issued "a severe reprimand" to Israel over the incident. *(FRUS 1952-54,* Vol. IX (part 1), No. 890; *Ha'aretz,* 8, 9 September 1954.)

3. The three abducted Legion soldiers, another soldier and a policeman who had been taken prisoner in earlier incidents, were handed over to the U.N. Observers on 4 September. Still on 2 September, prior to the decision of the Commission calling for their return, Chief of Staff Dayan had announced Israel's willingness to return the five with the aim of easing the tension on the border, on one condition, that the U.N. would afterwards arrange for the return of the Israeli soldier held prisoner by the Jordanians since the Azzun incident. Also during the handing over of the abducted soldiers a letter was handed to General Burns in which it was again pointed out that the release was a sign of goodwill for the sake of easing the tension between Israel and Jordan. The Israeli soldier was returned on 29 October. (See the correspondence on the matter in File 130.02/2429/7.)

350. Policy Guidelines by the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem). 5 September 1954

Copy: 130.02/2455/2

Summary

Sharett provides Eban and other diplomats with guidelines for activities in the United States.[1] Criticism should be made and objections expressed against the arming of the Arab states, against the disturbance of the balance of power, against generous economic aid to the Arabs, but at present no positive counterclaims should be made. Efforts should also be made within the Democratic Party to object to the political line being followed which considers the main function to be supplying arms rather than strengthening economic and social frameworks, thus helping the Arabs attain democracy. Even if this campaign does not obtain immediate results, it does contain a

warning for the future, prepares the ground for future struggles, and may even attain partial success.

As for further meetings with the secretary of state:[3] they should express their appreciation of his goodwill, his sympathy and sincerity as reflected in previous statements, but it should be explained that this does not provide a solution to the problem. Israel is given promises, while Egypt builds bases from which to attack, Iraq receives arms, and Jordan receives military equipment from Britain. It should be stressed that Israel's security requires equality and balance of power. It should be pointed out that Israel has never received a genuine undertaking to guarantee its security. Nevertheless, the demand for military aid should not be renewed at this point, and if a proposal is made it should be evaluated on its merits. The issue of the maritime blockade should be raised in connection with economic aid to Israel, but despite the importance of freedom of navigation, the secretary of state should not be allowed to concentrate on this point and in this manner to evade the main issue of arming the Arab countries. The inequality should be stressed between negotiations held publicly with the Arab states, while in contrast, promises to Israel are made clandestinely.

As for exchange of Notes: this should be avoided at the present stage of negotiations. Such a conclusion is designed to extract from Israel an expression of satisfaction and Israel has no interest in giving approval to the line being followed by the Department of State. This relates especially to the process of a prearranged formulation of exchange of Notes, and less to a process whereby an American Note will be sent to which Israel can respond in the manner it considers suitable. A public statement on the part of the United States would be preferable, since Israel could react to it as it deems fit.

Notes

1. The briefing in this document is a full and amended text of the briefing given by the minister of foreign affairs which was sent to Washington on 14 September. The previous text is filed under 93.04/40/19. The main points of the briefing had been given to Eban before then, in Israel, prior to his return to his post in Washington. In the full wording paragraphs 3, 4(6) and 4(10) were added.
2. See No. 338
3. Eban's conversation with Dulles – see No. 359.

351. Minister of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Defence. 7 September 1954

Memorandum: CZA A245/195

Summary

Sharett writes that in view of the rumours or reports concerning Jordan's intention to carry out retaliatory acts for the last incident,[1] and the possibility that the target would again be Israeli Jerusalem, it seems to him that it is worthwhile giving an instruction to exercise a wide ranging restraint with regard to sniping from the wall, if it is resumed.

Since the issue of Jerusalem has once again become a matter of great sensitivity from the international standpoint, Israel should be very careful not to give Jordan a pretext by some careless action in this area. Perhaps it would be worthwhile to suggest to the U.N. once more the arrangement regarding direct contact between the commanders in the Jerusalem area.

With regard to the demilitarization proposal, he sent a report on his meeting with the French ambassador.[2] Israel was trying to find out more exactly the scope of the proposed demilitarization before the joint consultation was held.

Notes

1. On September 2 the press bureau in Amman announced that King Hussein had summoned the ambassadors of Britain and the United States and informed them that if a stop was not put to Israel's aggression on the border Jordan would be compelled to review its attitude to the Armistice Agreement with Israel, and even envisage the possibility of adopting a tough policy. (See *Ha'aretz,* 3 September 1954.) On the tough talk held by King Hussein with the United States ambassador in Amman see *FRUS 1952-54,* Vol. IX (part 1), No. 890.

   After the meeting of the Armistice Commission on 3 September, which discussed and adopted a resolution on the Beit Liqya incident, Radio Ramallah announced that the Jordanian representative had declared in the Commission that Jordan would not be responsible in the future for any reaction or revenge operation on the part of the Jordanian Army as a result of Israel's refusal to adopt practical measures to put an end to these attacks. (See Tekoah to the minister of foreign affairs, 5 September 1954, 130.02/2429/7.)

2. See No. 344 and n. 1.

352. Major-General E.L.M. Burns (Jerusalem) to M. Sharett. 7 September 1954

Notes

1. In a report on 7 September which he handed to U.N. secretary-general on the Beit Liqya incident (see No. 349), Burns stated that this operation, whose dimensions had shocked the authorities and public in Jordan, was the climax of a series of smaller operations, the gravest of which were the Azzun raid and the raids in Khirbet Sikka–Dir al Assel. He warned that armed raids across the border, in response to incursions accompanied by theft or killing as was claimed, were contrary to the Armistice Agreement and liable to develop into hostilities. He called on the governments to adopt all measures in order to prevent incidents, and among other things to avoid manoeuvres close to the border and to prevent illegal border crossings. The report was printed as U.N. document S/3290.
2. Contacts for the renewal of the Local Commanders' Agreement did in fact take place at the time – see No. 340. At a meeting on 8 September, General Burns informed Dayan that his people had looked into the matter with the Jordanians and got the impression that there was a chance of reaching an agreement. He gave Dayan the draft of a local commanders agreement for the Jerusalem area which included technical instructions for communication between the sides, and ensuring the discipline of the soldiers on the line, and ended with a paragraph stating that the clauses of the Local Commanders' Agreement of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission from 1 December 1953 would also apply to the Jerusalem area. Dayan's reaction was that he had not suggested an agreement, but an arrangement of contacts and promised to bring the proposal before the minister of defence. (See A. Shalev's report on the meeting, 19 September 1954, together with the draft of the arrangement, 130.16/2954/7.) On 16 September Shalev handed Burns an amended wording of the draft, in which all intervention of the U.N. in the matter had been omitted, as also the paragraph about the application of the previous agreement of December 1953. On 10 October, General Burns stated, at a meeting with the chief of staff, that he had received General Glubb's agreement to the Israeli proposal. (See Shalev to Burns, 16 September 1954, and the attached text of the commanders' arrangement in Jerusalem, 130.16/2948/17.) See also Israel's written proposal – No. 414.
3. Tekoah saw in the very passing of the early copy of the report to the prime minister for his comments a new development testifying to an important contribution to improving the atmosphere. At the same time he pointed out that it was impossible to disregard the signs indicating that in the coming months a concerted effort would be made to expand the authority of the U.N. personnel. Therefore he proposed seizing the opportunity of the reaction to the report in order to take the initiative and announce the return to the Armistice Commission, to ask General Burns to conduct a thorough survey of the situation on the border, and in the meanwhile to obtain Jordan's agreement to marking the border and for the placing of physical obstacles along it. In addition, he proposed to invite him to examine the state of implementation of the various instructions in the Armistice Agreement, in particular with regard to paragraph XII, and to convene the Commission to implement paragraph VIII. (See Tekoah to Kidron, 21 September 1954, 130.02/2429/7.) See also No. 381.

353. M. Kidron (New York) to G. Rafael. 8 September 1954

Coded Tel. 60; Inc.: 130.02/2451/20

Summary

Kidron reports on an unofficial meeting of the Palestine Conciliation Commission that discussed the question of Arab refugees' blocked accounts.[1] The members of the commission asked Israel to give up its demand to have a direct meeting with the depositors. Such a meeting, in their opinion, was liable to delay the solution. They agreed that the previous procedure had complicated matters and they thought that the best way would be to make a direct transfer to the banks to be distributed on their own responsibility. They repeated several times their desire to help Israel by producing a positive feeling in the General Assembly's session. They had no knowledge of the Refugee Congress' letter of 20 July. Kidron asks Rafael whether he is certain that the letter was actually sent. In view of the circumstances he repeats his previous advice to Rafael to put an end to that affair.

Notes

1. Regarding the release of the blocked accounts of the refugees – see No. 333.
2. At the end of 1952, the U.N. secretary-general, at the request of the Conciliation Commission, appointed a special team to deal with the identification and evaluation of the Arab assets in Israel, for which they were likely to present compensation claims. This team included Sami Hadawi, a land assessor in the former Mandate administration. In a progress report to the Assembly, the Conciliation Commission described the team's work and estimated that the identification work in the Gaza Sub-District would be completed by the end of 1954. (See Thirteenth Progress Report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, Document A/2629 and corr. 1, *GAOR, Ninth Session,* 1954, Annexes, Agenda item 18.)
3. In the detailed report he sent, Kidron explained to members of the Commission that the obstacles which Israel had encountered at the first stage of the release had been placed there by political bodies in the Arab states that were afraid that the success of the campaign would lead to an improvement in Israel-Arab relations. As a matter of fact, contrary to hopes, relations between the parties worsened. An additional fact – the release failed, since out of the 1 million pounds sterling allocated for the first stage, requests had been tendered only for 650,000 pounds sterling. In the second stage a larger sum was involved – 2,700,000 pounds sterling, but this involved a smaller group of depositors (not more than 950 people) whose deposit was above 500 pounds sterling. In spite of its disappointment, Israel had decided to continue with the campaign, on condition of a face to face meeting with the representatives of the depositors. The meeting was designed to prevent hitches which had characterized the first stage, but it also had political significance, and this was the main aim of this enterprise.

Barco expressed doubt concerning the usefulness of setting the condition of the meeting with the depositors' representatives. According to the information possessed by the Americans there was no official representation of the refugees, and even if such were found – it would be unable to meet with Israeli representatives. If Israel wished to derive political benefit from the release of the funds it would be better to end the affair as quickly as possible, and to hand over the role of distribution to the two banks involved in the affair. The French representative supported the American view, but Kidron replied that Israel would under no circumstances agree to play down its role in this affair.

Kidron advised that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs accepts the Commission's advice and would forego the demand for direct negotiations with the representatives of the depositors. In his view it was very doubtful whether such a meeting would take place and whether the release of the deposits would bring political benefit to Israel, but there was no doubt at all that dragging out the matter would only cause damage. (See Kidron to Rafael, 9 September 1954, 130.02/2451/20.) See also No. 386 (Editorial Note.).

354. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (London). 10 September 1954

Coded Tel. 253; Outg.: 130.09/2320/1

Summary

In an urgent telegram, Rafael informs Eban of the decision to send a test vessel through the Suez Canal that will reach the entrance to the Canal on 16 September.[1] The minister of foreign affairs is most interested that the meeting between Eban and Dulles be held prior to this date, at the latest on the 16th. Requests that Eban cable whether the meeting has been arranged and the date.[2]

Notes

1. On 9 September, in a consultation between the minister of defence and the chief of staff, it was decided to implement the decision in principle to send a test vessel flying the Israeli flag through the Suez Canal or the Straits of Tiran (See Nos. 310, 318, 332). The ship selected for the assignment was the *Bat Galim*, which was waiting for this purpose at the port of Massawa in Ethiopia. It was decided that it should sail through the canal on 14 September; if the Egyptians didn't confiscate it and contented themselves with just refusing it entry to the Canal – the ship would return to Massawa. At that same meeting Minister of Defence Lavon explained that he had demanded that the ship should go through the Straits of Tiran but Sharett had insisted that the transit should be through the Suez Canal. (See M. Dayan, *Story of My Life*, pp. 128, 132 [Hebrew].)

2. Eban cabled that there was no possibility of holding the interview with the secretary of state before the 16th of the month, and demanded that the sailing should be delayed by at least a fortnight, since there was every indication that the State Department attached the greatest importance to his conversation with Dulles (See Eban to Sharett, telegram 71, 13 September 1954, 130.09/2331/13).

In the end the interview was fixed for the 15th of the month – see No. 359, see also No. 358.

355. Y. Meroz (Washington) to H. Cidor. 10 September 1954

Copy: 93.04/42/23

Summary

Meroz states that this is a personal letter, and does not reflect the opinion of the embassy. The matter concerns Cyprus[1] which is on the agenda of the forthcoming session of the United Nations General Assembly. In his opinion, Israel should coordinate its position not only with Britain, but also with Turkey. This country, as opposed to Greece, maintains good and close contacts with Israel, while Greece refrains strictly from making progress in its relations with Israel, and its many promises are not fulfilled. The Arabs, on the other hand, support the Greek stand. In his opinion, the Turks will never understand non-commitment – i.e., abstention – by Israel on this matter. As for Greece, a decisive stand would be effective. But if despite this, it is decided to maintain the "sacred" principle [of self determination] it would be best to absent themselves from the sessions. Israel should not explain its votes; any explanation will only be harmful.

Notes

1. Greece presented a request to include on the agenda of the ninth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations the paragraph "implementation under U.N. sponsorship of the principle of equality of rights and self-determination of nations with regard to the population of the island of Cyprus." Britain, of which Cyprus was a crown colony, rejected the very right of the U.N. to debate the subject, and obtained the support of the NATO nations, the United States and the British Commonwealth for its stand. Turkey announced that it would oppose the inclusion of the paragraph in the agenda.

In a consultation held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 26 August, headed by the foreign minister, it was decided to support the U.N.'s right of debate on this issue as a principle, but in essence to oppose a referendum and other motions regarding U.N. intervention and the advancement of the idea of union with Greece (Enosis). It was decided in the meantime not to reveal the Israeli position to the British, but

when the time came to demand easing the restrictions placed on Israel in Cyprus in the areas of aviation and trade, and the employment of Israelis and Israeli companies. (130.11/2505/27)

In the end the paragraph was included in the Assembly agenda, but on 17 December the Assembly plenum decided to adopt the resolution of the First Committee not to debate the matter just now. Israel voted for the resolution.

356. Sh. Bendor (Paris) to the West European Division. 10 September 1954

Copy: 130.10/2520/8

Summary

Bendor writes about the situation of the Jews in Morocco.[1] Easterman and Dreyfus-Schmidt who have recently returned from there describe the situation as very difficult. Fear is widespread among the Jews, the future is unclear, and the wealthy are already transferring monies overseas. Furthermore, there is no leadership, and the leaders of the urban communities are not concerned about the situation in the rural communities. The nationalist party has no antisemitic policy at the moment, but they are receiving assistance from the Arab League, especially from Egypt, and from Spain. The Jews object to receiving the status of a political minority, but on the other hand reject the French proposal to grant them French citizenship for fear that this would compromise them with the local Arab population.

Notes

1. See No. 335.

357. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 12 September 1954

Notes

1. At the beginning of September a number of incidents occurred on the Egyptian border: on 2 September a bridge was blown up and slightly damaged in the desert region, on the road between Eilat and Ein Netafim. On the night between the 4th and 5th of September a tractor driver was killed in the fields of Kibbutz Ruhama; early in the morning of September 7 the main water pipe close to Nir Am was blown up. On 13 September the Israel-Egypt Armistice Commission adopted two resolutions

condemning Egypt for the last two incidents. In the two resolutions the Commission noted with concern the fact that a serious situation existed along the Armistice line with Egypt.

In an announcement on 8 September the I.D.F. Spokesman noted that the acts of sabotage bore the distinctive characteristics of planned operations by elements having free access to explosives, official elements or an organized gang acting in coordination with authorized persons in the Gaza Strip, and there was reason to assume that the Egyptian regime was interested, after the signing of the agreement for the evacuation of the Suez Canal area, in increasing the tension on the Gaza Strip border. (See *Ha'aretz*, 9 September 1954.)

2. See No. 349.
3. In a talk with Shiloah (Shimoni was also present) on 1 September, Jernegan expressed concern over the developments in Israel in the past few days, which showed that the efforts of the secretary of state to restore trust had not succeeded. He complained about the extreme statements coming from the Israeli government and its associates against the American policy in the Middle East which supplied fuel to the extremists. He also commented that even if the Israeli government was not satisfied with the promises made by the secretary of state, it would be best if it kept this to itself and did not publicly air its concerns. (Telegrams to the United States Division, W807, W809, 1 September 1954, 2 September 1954, 93.01/2210/18.)
4. On 30 August, Sharett made a statement in the Knesset at the beginning of the foreign policy debate. He criticized the United States and Britain for their policy towards Israel on the one hand, and towards the Arab states on the other, as this found expression in the agreement that Britain was about to sign with Egypt. According to this agreement Britain, with the approval of the United States, would transfer to Egypt the control of the Suez Canal, without demanding that it totally lift the blockade on shipping to Israel, and the Canal area, with its military installations, without making this conditional on an Egyptian commitment to make peace with Israel, and also without strengthening Israel. The omission of Israel from the list of contingencies in which the base in the Canal area would become operative again, according to one of the clauses of the agreement, and giving official approval to the security pact of the Arab league, meant politically that the Powers were abandoning Israel. The United States was widening the existing military gap by its decision to extend military and economic aid to Egypt and arms to Iraq unconditionally with regard to Israel and contrary to the Three Power Declaration. Israel found itself, therefore, in a serious dispute with these two powers.

   Although Sharett expressed appreciation for the reassuring statements voiced by the leaders of the Powers, that under no circumstances would they abandon Israel, nevertheless he stressed that Israel was expecting actions to make amends clearly and without delay. At the end of the debate the Knesset adopted a resolution "expressing its profound concern over the policy of the arming of the Arab states by the United States and Great Britain ... and in view of the disregard for the security problems of Israel and the requirements for the stability and peace of the Middle East in the agreement for the evacuation of the Suez area." (See *Divrei Haknesset* (Knesset Reports), Third Session of the Second Knesset, Vol. XVI, pp. 2547-2551, 2610 [Hebrew].)
5. In a news conference broadcast over "Kol Israel" on 2 September, Eban described the political campaign in which Israel was currently involved as the most fateful

political campaign since the establishment of the State. Its main points were: first – the security of Israel in view of the animosity surrounding it, and second – its relations with the United States and Britain in light of their current policy. He said that Israel was explaining to the Powers that it was not prepared to be the passive object of schemes being woven around it, and that in its struggle it would use all the means at its disposal, such as the ability to arouse public opinion in the United States. (See Jewish Agency, *Digest of Press and Events*, 17 September 1954.)

6. On the Mevo Betar incident on 19 June, see No. 299, n. 1. At Ramat Raziel one guard was killed and two were wounded by infiltrators, on 28 August – see No. 349, n. 1.
7. See No. 359.
8. See No. 349, n. 2.
9. Following this conversation, the Department of State instructed Ambassador Caffery in Egypt to exert his full influence to reduce or to completely halt the border incidents. Israel was asked to do all in its power to improve the atmosphere by cooperating with the chief of staff of U.N. Truce Supervision Organization, General Burns, including returning to the Armistice Commission with Jordan. (See the United States Division to the embassy in Washington, IW843, 19 September 1954, 130.09/2310/7.)

358. Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Defence. 13 September 1954

Copy: 130.02/2446/11

Summary

Sharett requests that urgent instructions be given for postponement of the sailing of the Bat Galim by one week, i.e., 21 September.[1] This postponement is essential to enable Eban to hold a meeting with the secretary of state without disturbance. He is aware that by sending the ship, Israel is insisting on its undisputed right, but he knows from experience that every time Israel takes such a step, the Americans complain it is sabotaging its efforts to find a solution. He sees no point in undermining the principal line of argument that Israel is following with the Americans. Eban's meeting should be devoted to the issue of upsetting the balance of power and the arming of the Arab states. In no way should Dulles be given any ammunition that can be used against Israel. Since he is aware that the minister of defence will not agree with him, he wishes to add by way of clarification that he considers the passage of the ship as a specifically political act and not a matter of security. If after this clarification the minister of defence does not accept his opinion, he will have no choice but to convene the Ministerial

Committee of Foreign Affairs and Defence to take a decision, and this letter serves as an invitation to a meeting of the committee.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 354. Sharett dictated this letter after learning that Lavon had given instructions to postpone the sailing of the ship by one day only. (See M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. 2, p. 577 [Hebrew].)
2. See No. 349.
3. Lavon passed Sharett's letter to Dayan with the addition of his letter to Dayan. In his opinion, the prime minister's intervention had changed the operation into "a second Benot Yaaqov enterprise". The conversation with Dulles was only the prelude to further talks, and there was no end to the matter. "It's a waste of nervous energy, manpower and money". And in conclusion he wrote: "And take this as an order: put an end to the operation". (See M. Dayan, *Story of My Life*, pp. 132-133 [Hebrew].)

359. A. Eban (Washington) to J. Herzog. 15 September 1954

Notes

1. See No. 321.
2. See No 351 and n. 1. Prior to the conversation, Eban received an up-to-date wording of the main points of the briefing. (IW822, 14 September 1954, 130.09/2310/7.)
3. Eban is apparently referring to the interview given by Nasser to the U.P. news agency on 14 September, in which he said that a third of the Israeli-Arab conflict would be solved if Israel gave up the Negev, so that there would be territorial continuity in the Arab world. (See report of the United Press from Cairo, 14 September 1954, 93.08/413/2.)
4. He is apparently alluding to the resolution condemning Egypt by the Israel-Egypt Armistice Commission after the incidents in the Negev at the beginning of September – See No. 357 and n. 1.
5. At a speech delivered at a press conference in Jerusalem on 3 September, Eban said that Israel's determined opposition to the unilateral arming of the Arab states made it essential to preserve its friendship with the United States which was its most important international asset. Israel was far from being indifferent to international problems, but since it was facing an even closer threat – the hostility of the Arab states surrounding it – it had to maintain the balance of power with these states even if this involved controversy with the United States. This controversy was now at its height, and the Israeli claims had made an impact on public opinion in the free world, and recently also the U.S. secretary of state had begun to show signs of concern and goodwill. The question now was whether it was possible to translate this understanding into actions that would prevent deterioration in the strategic balance. (See *Jerusalem Post*, 5 September 1954.)
6. See No. 357, n. 5. Apparently Dulles had received reports from Russell on additional statements by Eban, not made publicly, from which he inferred that Eban

favoured a forceful approach – See *FRUS 1952-54*, Vol. IX, (part 1), Nos. 868, 877.

7. At the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Eban revealed that it was he who had used the word equality, but Dulles had replied that this was not the correct term, since he was not prepared to tie himself to mechanical parity of Israel vis à vis all the Arab states. Eban disagreed, and said that the expression equality should be accepted as a slogan, and then it would be possible to find ways to flesh it out with content. The last sentence in the paragraph was uttered by Dulles. (See United Sates Division to the Israel embassy in Washington, IW831, 16 September 1954, 130.09/2310/7; Eban to the United States Division, W861, 16 September 1954; W872, 17 September 1954, both filed under 130.09/2310/11.)
8. See also a full report of the conversation in File 130.02/2414/28.)

360. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 15 September 1954

Coded Tel. TNWA547; Outg.: 130.09/2312/8

Summary

Tekoah reports on talks between the chief of staff and Burns. They discussed the matter of patrols of U.N. Truce Observers along the border.[1] The chief of staff explained that such patrols could be carried out only at the recommendation of both sides. Burns replied that he would not act without the agreement of Israel. He added that the United Nations interpretation of the authority of the observers differed from that of Israel, but in the event of disagreement he had to be content with reporting to the U.N. In the meantime he had sent a number of observers to various observation points in the Old City of Jerusalem and hoped that Israel would not object.

Dayan replied that there was no need to hold a discussion of principle on the authority of the observers, since Burns had stated that he had no intention of beginning to patrol the border. As for Jerusalem, if Burns puts his proposal in writing, Israel would consider it. The matter could perhaps be left to the final decision of the Jerusalem commanders, to whose meeting Israel had agreed. Burns agreed and said he would put the matter in writing.[3]

The second part of the meeting was devoted to the issue of the status of Mt. Scopus, in light of reports of new restrictions on convoys going up to the mount. Burns undertook to investigate the matter. The blowing up of the water conduit in the vicinity of Nir Am was also discussed.[6] Burns would take up the matter with the Egyptians and demand the cessation of sabotage, but wished to be assured that no reprisal action would be taken.

Notes

1. On 30 August, Hutchison, the chairman of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission informed the senior Israeli representative on the Commission of the organization and procedure of the U.N. Observers patrols along the Armistice line: the line would be divided into four regions, one of which would be the Jerusalem region; the patrols would be held two or three times per week, both on the Israeli side and on the Jordanian side of the line. In accordance with the regular procedure since the Israeli withdrawal from the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission, the letter was returned to its sender. Meanwhile, instructions were sent to the Israeli delegation not to cooperate with this arrangement. (See Hutchison to the senior Israeli representative, 30 August 1954; Shalev's instructions to the Israeli delegation to the Commission, 7 September 1954, 130.16/2947/6.)
2. Telegrams from Tekoah to the missions in Washington, London, Paris and Rome, presenting a summary of the meeting with General Burns on 8 September 1954 regarding the Local Commanders' Agreement – see No. 352, n. 2.
3. At the meeting, Burns said that he had no plans to expand the system of Observer patrols without the prior agreement of the parties, but he reiterated the U.N. position that free movement was necessary for the Observers in the areas susceptible to violations of the cease-fire regulations or the Armistice Agreement. As to the patrols of the Observers in the Jerusalem area, they would be discussed by the local commanders, or should the local commanders' arrangement not be implemented, by the U.N. Chief Supervision Officer and the parties. (See exchange of letters, Shalev to Burns, 20 September 1954, Burns to Shalev, 23 September 1954, 130.16/2947/6.) See also No. 367 and n. 4.
4. Paragraph VIII in the Israel-Jordan Armistice Agreement dealt with the setting up of a Special Committee composed of the representatives of the two parties for expanding and improving the ways of implementing the Armistice Agreement. This Committee was to have been set up immediately after the agreement came into force and the discussions over its setting up had continued, unsuccessfully, since the agreement.
5. The agreement about Mount Scopus, which was signed on 7 July 1948 between the army commanders of Jordan and Israel, and the U.N. representatives, applied to the Jewish institutions on the enclosure that had been cut off from Jerusalem, the Arab village of Issawiyya and the Auguste Victoria Hospital. The U.N. undertook responsibility for the security of the area, and it was decided that the access to it would be solely through checkpoints which would be set up in the no-man's-land. The U.N. would limit the number of persons on the mountain to the personnel required for running the institutions on it, and would supervise the exchange of personnel in fortnightly convoys. (See Vol. 2, Appendix 5, pp. 629-631.)
6. See No. 357, n. 1.
7. See No. 245 and notes 1 and 3.

361. M. Fischer (Istanbul) to the West European Division. 16 September 1954

Orig.: 130.10/2536/13

Summary

Fischer reports on his meeting with Foreign Minister Küprülü who told him that his government had decided to try to enlist the help of Israel to obtain a loan from the United States.[1] Fischer replied that Israel would be prepared to place all its resources at the disposal of Turkey, but this would necessitate the appointment of a representative to be in contact with the Israeli embassy in the United States.[3]

The discussion then moved on to matters relating to the U.N. Assembly and international issues as well as the problem of Cyprus.[2] The minister did not enquire about Israel's stand on this matter except to state that the Greeks did not understand that the matter should be dropped and that they should concentrate on confronting the common threat. Fischer replied that this realistic approach was in keeping with Israel's attitude, and he hoped that Turkey would take the same line as regards the Arab problem.

Notes

1. The matter involves Turkey's appeal, at the beginning of July, for Israel's help in obtaining a 250 million-dollar loan in the United States. Although the appeal was not an official one, behind it were the Prime Minister Menderes and his deputy Zorlu. Ambassador Fischer recommended acceding to the request, and in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs there was a willingness to make a serious and extensive effort in the United States. Eban also believed that it was desirable to commit to making "an active effort" on condition that the Turkish appeal to Israel should be official. And in fact such an appeal was made during Fischer's conversation with Zorlu on 4 September, at the latter's initiative. Fischer replied that Israel would be happy to put at Turkey's disposal its contacts in the United States, and advised them to appoint an expert on the Turkish economy who would be in contact with the Israeli ambassador there. Zorlu asked Fischer to wait for a further approach, which was indeed made on 15 September, as mentioned in the present document. (See Fischer to Sharett, 11 July 1954, 93.01/2211/11; Fischer to the West European Division, 6 September 1954, 130.10/2536/13; 15 September 1954, 130.02/2412/1; Eban to the United States Division, 743, 6 August 1954, 130.09/2310/11; Meroz to the United States Division, 7 September 1954, 130.02/2412/1.)
2. No. 355.
3. In Israel they attached great importance to this matter. At the end of November Sharett contacted Eban and Shiloah and stressed that "this is one of the operations in which we have to do the impossible". (Telegram 112, 27 November 1954,

130.09/2310/8.) In any event, in a conversation that took place between them in December 1954, Zorlu still asked Fischer if there was a chance for an American loan to Turkey. Fischer advised Shiloah to send an expert "equipped with all the material without which the banks there cannot make a decision". He repeated the assurance that Israel would help with all the influence it could muster in the United States. (See Fischer to the director of the West European Division, 23 December 1954, 130.10/2536/13.)

362. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 16 September 1954

Coded Tel. 860; Outg.: 130.02/2455/2

Summary

In a personal telegram, Eban refers to the exchange of telegrams with Sharett concerning postponement of the trial sailing of a test ship through the Suez Canal.[1] At his meeting with Dulles the matter of free passage through the Canal was referred to in three contexts: 1. The Americans reiterated their objection to the blockade; 2. They admitted that no serious negotiations on this issue were in process; 3. They listened without comment to Eban's statement that Israel continues to take advantage of its legal right of passage, but fears that Egypt would intercept the vessel and then Israel would file a claim against Egypt in the international court. Taking these factors into account, there exists a complex balance of both profit and danger if the sailing is immediate. There are those who claim that the sailing would emphasize Israel's right of free passage, but there are also those who claim that the sailing would be exploited against Israel because they had forced the issue at a time when there was a possibility of progress in the talks with Dulles. Eban supported the former approach. Postponement of the sailing for two weeks would make it possible to benefit from both approaches.[4]

Notes

1. Following the postponed sailing of the ship (see No. 358) Eban cabled Sharett that he had breathed a sigh of relief when informed of the postponement, since in his opinion the whole matter had to be reviewed in the light of the possible developments in his meeting with Dulles. Sharett replied that the sailing could not be delayed indefinitely, and apart from the large sum of money invested in the operation, the decision on the sailing was a long-term political decision, which Eban had agreed to at the time, and the operation could not be cancelled. (See Eban to Sharett, WIA850, 14 September 1954, 93.01/2211/11; Sharett to Eban, IW826, 16 September 1954, 130.09/2310/7.)

2. With the secretary of state Dulles – See No. 359.
3. See there, notes 3, 4.
4. Sharett's reply – No. 368.

363. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 17 September 1954

Coded Tel. IWA834; Outg.: 130.02/2455/2

Summary

The Division sends first reactions to Eban's meeting with Dulles.[1] (1) The conversation was worthwhile in that it revealed the direction of the secretary of state's thinking and the intrigues of his staff. (2) As regards point 2 in his reply: it would seem that his staff had suggested to him that appeals against the arming of the Arabs are the result of inspiration and incitement by Israel and not a genuine concern of the American public. This requires a supreme effort to apply direct pressure on him prior to the continuation of the discussions so that he would gain the impression that the abandonment of Israel could shock American public opinion, and not only Zionists.

As for the expression "prefer impartiality to equality" in point 3 in the secretary's reply:[3] what Israel feared has become a reality. The Americans are trying to overcome Israel's objection in principle to the arming of the Arabs by providing military aid to Israel. Thus Israel, which admits the necessity to arm the region as a whole and as it is involved in this process could not logically demand tank for tank.

The prime minister is away at the moment and they are waiting for his comments and instructions for the continuation of contacts.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 359.
2. The Democratic candidate for the post of governor of the State of New York, who was elected to the post in November 1954, was Averell Harriman. His speech, see No. 427, n. 2.
3. See No. 359, n. 7.
4. Sharett's reaction to the conversation with Dulles – see No. 364. Eban totally endorsed the assessment of the situation and the conclusions in the document presented here. Regarding paragraph 2 in the telegram he asserted that they were exerting heavy pressure on several of the key Republican candidates, including Ives, the Republican candidate for the post of governor of New York, and Vice-President Nixon, in order that they should in turn put pressure on Dulles, but he pointed out

the main difficulties facing them at this time. (a) We must continue to pester Dulles with a multiplicity of appeals and pressures, but at the same time not make him despair of us and break off the talks. (b) It is immeasurably more difficult to ensure wide-scale and considered Jewish action without our behind the scenes involvement and guidance being suspected. (See Eban to the United States Division, WIA881, 20 September 1954, 93.01/2210/18.)

364. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 17 September 1954

Coded Tel. IW835; Outg.: 130.09/2310/7

Summary

Sharett states in an urgent telegram that Eban's report on his meeting with Dulles[1] perplexed him, and he would appreciate it if he would reassure him. There was no intention of an initiative being taken by Israel with the aim of obtaining American action, but only condemnation of United States' policy in the hope of finding out what they would offer. Quoting the particular excerpt from Eban's address[2] might appease Dulles and reduce the feeling of annoyance at Sharett's speech in the Knesset.[3] The creation of a situation as though negotiations were proceeding between Israel and the United States is damaging. It is impossible to know how long such negotiations would continue and what would be the outcome – and in the meantime they would continue their pro-Arab policy. Israel's policy is directed entirely towards prevention of the possibility that the Department of State could claim that they were negotiating with Israel. Israel's approach is to bring about the mobilization of public pressure at all levels and with maximum momentum. Item 2 of the secretary's reply reveals that his main aim is to prevent such pressure. The meeting strengthens Sharett's conclusion that the vessel should be sent without further ado.[4] If there is any commitment on the part of the United States to end the blockade – then surely they should act when Israel implements its clear international right.[5]

Notes

1. No. 359.
2. See ibid., n. 5.
3. No. 357, n. 4.
4. See No. 362 and n. 1.
5. Eban's reply – see No. 365.

365. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 17 September 1954

Coded Tel. WIA873-874; Outg.: 93.01/2211/11

Summary

Eban replies to Sharett's telegram[1] in which he expressed his confusion at some of Eban's statements in his meeting with Dulles.[3] Eban explains that the speeches made in Israel, the Knesset resolution, and public pressure initiated by Israel in the United States had almost brought the secretary of state to the decision to relinquish every effort to come to an arrangement with Israel. His questions in his meeting with Eban only go to prove how close the suspension was, and their talk prevented this crisis. He does not understand Sharett's comment opposing the creation of a situation "as if" negotiations were proceeding. Negotiations in fact were proceeding, and it was his feeling that this was not a matter of weeks but rather imminent action. He requests Sharett to inform the government as follows:

1. He had expressed to Dulles the majority of the arguments as formulated in the written directives.[2]

2. The outcome of his meeting with the secretary of state was that Dulles had overcome his reluctance to hold talks and it had been decided to begin negotiations in the coming week.

3. Next week they can expect a document which would reveal the direction of Dulles' thoughts concerning the balance of power, and Israel is working behind the scenes to obtain details and to exert influence. There is no guarantee that the document will be of value, but once it is received Israel will be able to decide whether to amend it or begin a public campaign.

4. He had met with the Jewish leaders and requested their intensive intervention.

5. Very shortly, the president and the secretary would be hearing from political leaders of both parties. Results are already forthcoming in the form of undertakings that will object to a policy of one-sided provision of arms.

6. This morning a decision had been taken to hold an all-inclusive Jewish rally in Washington at the beginning of October. Problems existed because of internal rivalry among the Jews, but he had heard that the leaders who had met with Dulles during his absence had been most outspoken.

7. In his next meeting his approach would be as though the matter was now in Dulles' hands and he was waiting to hear his proposals – if he had any.

8. He requests that care be taken when reporting on activities being carried out by the Jewish community.

9. A written report of the meeting would be prepared which he hoped would clarify the situation.[11]

10. He would like to point out that he needs a greater feeling of trust in such a delicate situation, and he did not have the feeling that the three meetings with the secretary of state had been a failure at all.[12]

Notes

1. No. 364.
2. No. 350.
3. No. 359.
4. See ibid., n. 5.
5. See No. 357, n. 4.
6. See ibid., n. 4.
7. Se No. 366.
8. This refers to No. 362 (replying to telegram 826 from Sharett).
9. See No. 313 and No. 321.
10. Klutznick met with Dulles on 19 August and heard from him that he was personally engaged in finding a solution that would guarantee Israel's security and would present this solution to Eban on his return from Israel. Klutznick gained the impression that Dulles was concerned and conveyed a sense of urgency. (See Herlitz to Eban, W780, 20 August 1954, 93.01/2210/16.)
11. The full report of the conversation with Dulles (No. 359) in File 130.02/2414/28.
12. In response to the document presented here and also to No. 366, Sharett explained that he had never been against continuing the contact with Dulles. On the contrary, he saw no sense in severing the contact; but it was better for Israel to maintain, at least outwardly, that it had voiced its protestations to the Administration and it was waiting to hear if it had anything clear to say, instead of accepting the Administration's official version, that negotiations with Israel were being conducted. In the first case – Israel was free to move heaven and earth, whereas in the second – its hands were tied. He added that he was very happy with the speeding up of the public demonstration and the unity among the Jewish public that had been achieved despite the difficulty. (Sharett's telegram to Eban, No. 883, 28 September 1954, 130.09/2310/7.)

366. A Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 18 September 1954

Coded Tel. WIA875; 93.01/2211/11

Summary

Eban reports on his meeting on 17 September with Jewish leaders. It was agreed that the ongoing discussions with Dulles demand a unified and organized stand by American Jewry. His proposal to arrange a mass public

rally was met with disfavour by the majority of participants. Some argued that the rally could not be organized soon enough to make an impact on Dulles, while others were not sure that their organizations would agree to participate. Also, the apprehension was expressed that such a rally could be identified as "Democratic" and thus its purpose defeated. Finally, a decision was taken to organize a festive convention of leading figures of organizations in Washington during the first week of October. There would be about five from each organization, i.e., about 150 leaders. The convention would draw up a joint resolution and call for a meeting with Dulles. A decision was taken to organize other activities to create a favourable climate of public opinion.

367. Major-General E.L.M. Burns to Rav Aluf M. Dayan. 20 September 1954

Notes

1. See No. 360 and n. 3.
2. See No. 269 and notes.
3. Article XI (clause 10) of the Israel-Jordan Armistice agreement states that the members of the Armistice Commission and its Observers will be accorded the same freedom of movement and access in the field as the Commission had decided upon, on condition that if such a resolution were adopted by a majority of votes only the U.N. observers would be used.
4. Dayan replied that Israel's opposition to the carrying out of the patrols in Jerusalem or to any other action of the U.N. Observers not in accordance with the Armistice Agreement, as he had conveyed to Burns in writing and in conversation, had been approved again after further consideration. (See his letter to Burns, 22 September 1954, 130.16/2947/6.)

   In a telegram to the Israeli missions, Tekoah explained that Israel's opposition to the patrols system arose from its opposition in principle to the expansion of the U.N. personnel's authority as expressed in its reply to the 11-point proposal of the Three Powers (see No. 301, and n. 1), and from its desire to ensure observance of the agreements and the principle of bilateral agreement as a basis for changes in the Armistice Agreements and the operations of the U.N. personnel. Furthermore, it was very doubtful that these patrols could prevent border incidents. (See telegram, 22 September 1954, 130.09/2312/8.)

   On 26 September, Burns called a press conference in Jerusalem and announced that he had stopped the Observer patrols on the Israeli side of the line in Jerusalem because of Israel's opposition, whereas on the Jordanian side, since there was no opposition, the patrols were continuing. He added that if the matter were not settled, he would send a report on it to the United Nations (See *Ha'aretz*, 27 September 1954.)

The issue of the U.N. Observers' patrols along the Armistice line was discussed at a government meeting the same day. Dayan explained the on-going dispute with the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization. Israel held the view that the Observers can only operate within the framework of their functions in the Armistice Commissions, whereas the chief of staff of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organisation bases himself on the Security Council resolution of 11 August 1949, and sees it as his duty to preserve and uphold the armistice, so that he can act on his own initiative and does not have to wait for a complaint to be lodged by one of the parties or for war to break out. Dayan explained that the turnabout in the attitude of the chief of staff had come after Israel's rejection of the 11-point proposal for easing the tension (see No. 256) which included a paragraph on the Observers' patrols and the use of radio communication. It appeared that he was interested in implementing this proposal which Israel had rejected. Dayan reported on the exchange of letters with Burns and added that, on the instruction of the minister of defence the border police was preventing the access of the Observers to the Armistice line, and said that in addition, their increase in numbers and use of radio should be prevented.

After the ministers had made their statements, Sharett said that he agreed that a situation had arisen requiring an immediate decision, since it was out of the question to allow the chief of staff of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization to establish facts; however they ought to try and reach an honourable agreement with him. He suggested that Dayan should invite Burns for a talk and explain Israel's position with a view to searching for a way out. It was possible to make a special arrangement, at a particular place, because of a particular situation at a particular time, when the Observers drew their authority from the agreement of the parties. Sharett's suggestion was adopted. (See a stenographic record of the government meeting, 26 September 1954.)

At the government meeting on 3 October, Sharett reported that in the meantime Burns had received an opinion from the U.N. secretary-general according to which the secretary-general asserted that although he did not accept Israel's basic view that Burns had no authority, nevertheless the arrangement should not be actually implemented so long as the Armistice Commissions were operating properly. (See stenographic report of the government meeting, 3 October 1954.)

368. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 20 September 1954.

Coded Tel. IWA844; Outg.: 130.09/2310/7

Summary

Sharett replies to the ambassador's telegram[1] and states that his final decision is that the vessel will sail on Monday and will reach the entrance to the Canal on Wednesday or Thursday. Items 2 and 3 in Eban's telegram indicate that immediate action is required. The time is now ripe since negotiations with the Egyptians are not in progress and the signing of the agreement with

Britain is imminent. In the past, pressure was brought to bear on Israel to refrain from taking unilateral action on the pretext that negotiations were being carried out that would perhaps guarantee freedom of navigation. Now the agreement had been finalized, and the passage of the ship will prove either that navigation is guaranteed, or it is not, and this will be revealed to the world. At first he understood Eban's request not to create facts close to his meeting with Dulles, but since that meeting had taken place, there was no need to delay the sailing.[2]

Notes

1. No. 362.
2. See No. 369.

369. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 20 September 1954

Coded Tel. WIA883; 93.01/2210/18

Summary

He reacts to Sharett's telegram concerning the sailing of the vessel.[1] Israel must pretend that it had the absolute right to believe that the ship would pass through the Canal, and that the obstruction by the Egyptians is upsetting and surprising and requires international attention. No admission should be made that it was Israel's intention to trap the Egyptians and create complications. Thus it should be argued: (a) Egypt had signed an agreement with Britain that allowed free navigation and adherence to the Constantinople Convention. (b) In recent times, cargoes of this nature had not been stopped, no matter under what flag they sailed. If Israel was asked why it had not been satisfied with sending a ship flying a foreign flag, it could argue that it did not wish to involve a friendly nation. Furthermore, under the Constantinople Convention there was no difference between an Israeli vessel and any other, and over the years Israel had been told that the Egyptians abide by international law. He requests that he be informed by telegram of steps to be taken should the ship be detained.[2]

Notes

1. No. 368.
2. In an additional telegram Eban suggested lines of action to follow: when the ship

was stopped Israel would place the onus of freeing it on Britain and not on the United States, for the following reasons: the talks with Dulles were focusing on another issue and his attention should not be diverted; Britain was the one who had signed a draft agreement with Egypt that interference with shipping must be, in its words, avoided, and it was Britain who had taken the main initiative in the debate that took place on this subject in the Security Council in 1951. If Britain failed, he added, Israel would appeal to the Security Council, and simultaneously ask for the assistance of the United States, France and other maritime nations. (See telegram to Sharett, WIA882, 20 September 1954, 93.01/2210/20.) Sharett's reply see No. 377.

370. M. Avidan (Warsaw) to the Director of the East European Division. 20 September 1954

Orig.: 130.11/2496/8

Summary

Avidan reports on his meeting with Sluczansky of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs who informed him of Poland's desire to strengthen ties with many countries, including Israel, and to open a legation in Israel. Poland also hopes that Israel would raise the status of its representative in Warsaw. He requested Israel's agreement in principle.[1]

Notes

1. On the instruction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Avidan replied to Sluczanski on 22 September that Israel welcomed the intention to establish a legation in Israel, a step it had been expecting since the opening of the Israeli legation in Warsaw in 1948. As for the appointment of an Israeli minister in Warsaw, there was a permanent chargé d'affaires as the head of the legation who had been appointed a few months previously (Avidan had presented his letter of accreditation in February 1954). When the time came to consider changing the legation head, attention would be given to the wishes of the Polish government and the status of its representative in Israel. (See telegram from the East European Division to the legation in Warsaw, No. 332, 17 September 1954, 130.09/2306/3; telegram of Avidan to the M.F.A., 22 September 1954, 130.09/2306/6; additional correspondence in File 130.11/2496/8). Poland accredited a representative to Israel in December 1954, whereas Israel raised the level of the representative to legation only in September 1956, when Katriel Katz presented his letter of accreditation.

371. D. Lewin (Jerusalem) to G. Avner (London). 20 September 1954

Orig.: 93.04/42/8

Summary

Lewin reports about the situation of relations with China.[1] In both Rangoon and another place,[2] hints and suggestions had been received from the Chinese that they were interested in receiving a trade delegation and entering into diplomatic relations with Israel. In his view the two approaches are co-ordinated. In his opinion, the Chinese in fact wanted diplomatic relations and were less interested in trade relations. An internal discussion had been held in the government, the foreign minister arguing forcefully to proceed with the sending of the delegation. It was, however, resolved to postpone the decision until after the Geneva Conference that was to decide on peace or war between China and the West. Since the conclusion of the conference he had not succeeded in persuading the minister to bring up the matter for decision. Sharett said he would be prepared to do so only if something new happened, such as if Chou En-lai should set a date for the visit of the delegation. A few days ago an official invitation had been received and the Chinese were in the process of making arrangements and setting the date.[4] If nothing dramatic occurs, the foreign minister would not change his decision in principle, although a compelling argument would be required by the government.

Notes

1. See No. 316 and notes.
2. See No. 21.
3. See No. 231 and note 1.
4. The message was handed to David Hacohen on 11 September. He was told that the delegation could conduct negotiations on trade problems and any other matter involving the two friendly nations. The duration of the delegation's stay and its size would not be limited. On 17 September a written invitation was also presented. (See telegram from David Hacohen to the M.F.A., RJA78, 13 September 1954; letter from David Hacohen to the Asia Division, 14 September 1954, and letter from the ambassador of China in Burma, Yao Choung-ming, to David Hacohen 17 September 1954, all in File 93.13/226/3.) On the instructions of the M.F.A., the Israel's temporary chargé d'affaires in Burma confirmed receipt of the invitation and added that the delegation's composition and its departure date were under careful consideration. (See M. Leshem to Yao Choung-Ming, 11 October 1954, there.) See also No. 472.

372. Editorial Note

The Ninth Session of the U.N. General Assembly

On 21 September 1954, the ninth session of the U.N. General Assembly opened in New York. Among the main subjects on the agenda were: disarmament and the issue of the use of atomic weapons, international cooperation in developing the peaceful uses of atomic energy, the end of the war and the reunification of Korea, the question of China's representation in the United Nations and admission of new members to the U.N., the future of the government in Dutch New Guinea (Irian), the future of Cyprus, the question of Morocco and Tunisia and the apartheid policy in South Africa. The subject of Israel was not on the agenda, but was discussed in the framework of the debate on the (UNRWA) report. The Assembly session closed on 17 December 1954. (See briefing to the Israel delegation to the ninth session of the Assembly, reports to the Israel Missions Abroad, 7 September1954, 130.11/2505/27.

373. Consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (Jerusalem, 20 September 1954)

Copy: 130.02/2413/8

Summary

The consultation dealt with relations between Israel and France. Participating were the director-general of the ministry, the Israeli ambassador to Paris and senior ministry personnel.

Ambassador Tsur opened the deliberations by stating that during the past months there has been an improvement in relations between France and Israel. This has been the result of events in Syria, where French involvement has been weakened by the fall of Shishakli,[1] and they are looking for an additional sphere of influence in the Middle East. It also stems from pressure from the French military who are most interested in strengthening ties with Israel. Furthermore, the coming to power of Mendès France has weakened Catholic clerical influence in France. A decisive expression of the change in attitude towards Israel was given recently concerning the purchase of arms and the matter of the report of a union between Syria and Iraq. France informed Israel that it would support any attempt to prevent this union,

including military action.[2] As regards arms – at the moment there is no restriction on the purchase of military equipment in France except financial limitations. In order to strengthen the ties with France the ambassador proposed action on three levels:

1. Important French interests should be created in Israel, including capital investments and cultural contacts. The sphere of culture is very important to the French.

2. French public figures should be invited to visit Israel.

3. Initiatives and independent action on the part of France regarding Israel's political problems should be encouraged.

In the ensuing discussion, Tsur's proposals were accepted in general. However, Najar expressed some reservations: the improvement of relations should be treated with care. France had not completely abandoned its ties with the Arab states and had substantial interests in these countries, including investments and strong cultural institutions. Also, France's attitude regarding Jerusalem is problematic and it had not abandoned the idea of internationalization.

Notes

1. See No. 93 (Editorial Note).
2. Maillard made these statements to Bendor in their conversation on 1 September – see telegram from the embassy in Paris to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2 September 1954, 130.09/2345/4, and Najar's report on his conversation with Gilbert, 7 September 1954, 130.10/2540/1.
3. See No. 345.

374. Editorial Note

Selwyn Lloyd's Statement on 21 September on British Policy in the Middle East

On 17 September 1954, the eight diplomatic representatives of the Arab states in London handed a joint memorandum to the minister of state in the Foreign Office, Selwyn Lloyd. After presenting the memorandum and talking with the minister, the representatives held a press conference at which the Egyptian ambassador read a statement calling for granting economic and military aid to the Arab states, condemning Israel for what he termed aggressive conduct along the Jordanian border and for its expansionist intentions. He also called for the imposition of limitations on

immigration to Israel. The Egyptian ambassador stressed several times that the Arab states had no belligerent plans against Israel, and noted that if Israel complied with the U.N. resolutions this would be a step in the right direction. (See *Ha'aretz,* 19 September 1954.)

On 21 September 1954, Lloyd met for a second time with the eight representatives of the Arab states and handed them a declaration on British policy in the Middle East. He declared Britain's desire to promote friendship between the Arab states and the West and its desire to reinforce the defensive power of the Middle East and the region's economic development, as a buffer against communist penetration. He expressed Britain's concern over the situation on the borders between Israel and its neighbours, stressed the need to refrain from border incidents and reprisal raids, and expressed the hope that Israel would return to the Mixed Armistice Commission with Jordan. The way to resolve the problem, in Britain's view, was to conduct negotiations between the parties on the issues in dispute. Such negotiations could be direct or via a third party; it could be a preliminary discussion designed to create calmer conditions on the borders, which would lead to a broader discussion on the issues in dispute, or a general discussion to begin immediately. In each of these cases Britain was prepared to offer its good services, and meanwhile the British policy would continue to be based on the existing agreements and obligations, including the treaty with Jordan and the 1950 Three Power Declaration. The text of the declaration had been made public. (See Foreign Office Statement, 21 September 1954, 93.04/40/17.)

The British Foreign Office spokesman informed the press on 22 September, off the record, that the intention was not for calling a peace conference, that the British had consulted with the United States and France before they had drafted their reply, and that the initiative was now passing to the Arabs and Israel, but Britain was prepared at any time to offer its good services. (See Gazit to the M.F.A., telegram 973, 22 September 1954, 130.02/2457.)

375. E. Elath (London) to M. Sharett. 22 September 1954

Coded Tel. 977; Outg.: 93.04/41/6

Summary

Elath reported on his meeting with Foreign Secretary Eden. Eden began by referring to Sharett's speech in the Knesset that included several critical statements about Britain.[1] Elath replied that the speech reflected the current

mood in Israel. The foreign secretary then asked Elath if he had read their communiqué of the previous day.[2] He added that the Arabs were apprehensive of direct contact with Israel and had repeated this several times in conversations. In the Arab camp there are extremists as well as moderates, such as Nuri Said, who were sensitive to the global aspects of the region and to security. He said that both he and Churchill would be talking to Nuri and if anything that could be of interest to Israel should arise he would inform Elath.

In his reply, Elath praised the clause on peace in the British statement, but expressed doubt at the sincerity of the Arabs "peace campaign".[3] However, despite these doubts, Israel would not miss any opportunity for the holding of direct negotiations, jointly or with each state individually, although past experience has proved to Israel that separate negotiations are much more effective. Israel prefers direct negotiations without the participation of a third party. Eden reacted to the latter comment by saying that Britain has no intention of forcing itself upon the parties.

Elath proposed to Eden that after this meeting a communiqué should be issued similar to that published following the talks with the Arabs. Eden replied that he would have to consult with his aides. Elath then submitted the Note from Jerusalem.[5] Eden read it on the spot and commented that it was strongly worded. At all events, he stated that Israel had no cause for concern regarding equality in the supply of arms. Elath stated that in addition to the equality of arms supply and freedom of navigation, Israel is concerned at not being involved in regional security arrangements. Israel would be interested in entering into comprehensive talks on this issue. Eden replied that the matter was complex and he would not like to reply before consulting with his aides.[8]

Notes

1. See No 385, n. 4.
2. No 375 (Editorial Note).
3. On 17 September, at the end of a visit in Cairo and before setting out to visit London, the Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Said said that the Arab states had agreed to cooperate with the West on condition that the two problems of the Suez Canal and Palestine were resolved. Now, that the first problem had been resolved, he was certain that a solution for the second one would also soon be found, and added, "we shall make every effort to find a solution for it". (See *Ha'aretz*, 19 September 1954.)
4. See No. 208 and n. 4.
5. No. 376.
6. See No. 392.
7. On 28 September, a conference of nine nations took place – the United States, Britain, France, Canada, West Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium and

Luxembourg, to discuss the re-arming of Germany and its joining the Western defence system.
8. Compare with Eden's report on the conversation, in his letter to Evans, 22 September 1954, PRO, F0371/111074. See also Nos. 382, 383.

376. Note from the Israel Ambassador in Great Britain (London) to the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (London). 22 September 1954

Notes

1. On the delivery of the Note, see No. 375.
2. See No. 295 and n. 1.
3. See No. 285.
4. See No. 306 and n. 3.
5. See Vol. 8, No. 424, paragraph 6.
6. See ibid, No. 483.
7. Eden's reply – see No. 424.

377. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 22 September 1954

Coded Tel. 849; Outg.: 130.02/2409/12

Summary

Sharett replies to Eban's telegrams regarding the sailing of the ship.[1] He stated that Israel did not intend to request intervention unless the vessel was intercepted. In such case they would announce the facts in London and Washington and would state that if the ship were not liberated they would appeal to the Security Council. If they were asked to wait a while they would be prepared to accede to the request. The ship's crew had been instructed to follow the instructions of the Canal authorities and not to resist even if they were arrested. The ship's name was *Bat Galim* and it was carrying a cargo of meat bound for Haifa.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 369 and n. 2.
2. See No. 389.

378. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 22 September 1954

Notes

1. On 21 September, at the opening session of the Ninth Session of the U.N. General Assembly, the Soviet representative presented a draft resolution calling for seating a representative of the People's Republic of China in the China seat (instead of the representatives of the Republic of China) in the Assembly and other U.N. bodies. The United States presented two procedural motions: the first that the Assembly had decided not to discuss in its ninth session and during the year 1954 any motion regarding the changing of the representatives of China; the second – to vote first of all on its draft resolution. The American motions were carried by a large majority, with Israel and Britain among its supporters. Among those voting against were Burma, India, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and among those abstaining were Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. (See *Yearbook of the United Nations*, 1954, pp. 50-52.)
2. In a briefing to the Israeli mission to the U.N. Assembly, which was sent after consultations held in the Ministry on 26 August, led by the minister of foreign affairs and with the participation of Eban, two main directives were decided over the question of the changing of China's U.N. representation: (a) to try and follow the British line, on the assumption that this would be an intermediate line; (b) not to vote under any circumstances against the changing of the representation, and in practical terms to oppose an unlimited delay, to abstain or to support a vote on a partial delay, and to support changing the representation if the two other preceding possibilities failed. When it transpired, close to the opening of the debate, that Britain would support the removal of the paragraph concerning the changing of the Chinese representation from the Assembly's agenda, the Israeli delegation was instructed to abstain. This directive was not to the liking of the mission, which believed that it was preferable to join Britain and the rest of the Western states in the voting on a matter which was purely procedural, and which did not amount to any fundamental denial of the representation of the People's Republic of China in the U.N., particularly in view of the fact that there was no majority at the time for the actual motion for the seating of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations. In addition, Eban stressed that abstaining would not bring Israel any advantage, but on the contrary would do considerable harm to its standing in the United States. (See briefing to the Israeli mission to the ninth session of the U.N. Assembly, 7 September 1954, 130.11/2505/27; telegram of Levavi to the U.N. mission, No. 424, 19 September 1954, 130.09/2331/6; telegrams to the M.F.A. from Kidron, No. 104, 20 September 1954 and from Eban Nos. 107, 108, 21 September 1954, 130.09/2331/13; Eban to Rafael, W890, 21 September 1954, 93.01/2210/1.)
3. The anger and astonishment elicited from Israel led to a wave of explanations and clarifications from the mission, the main gist of which was: The instruction to abstain, which Rafael had cabled on the day of the voting, had arrived late; they had interpreted the briefing as permission to support a limited postponement, which was the motion supported by Britain; going against the mainstream of the Western

countries would have been harmful; and the paragraph that had been put to the vote was procedural – the postponing of the debate and not the Soviet motion to admit the People's Republic of China into the UN. Eban also suggested including in his statements in the general debate in the Assembly an explanation saying that Israel had not seen the point of bringing this problem for a decision which could be expected to fail, but it hoped that the U.N. members would shortly embark on a serious discussion and positive outcome to the problem. (See telegrams of Eban, X113, X118, 21 September 1954, 93.01/2188/9.)

Eban's suggestion for explaining Israel's position in the speech he would make in the general debate, met with Sharett's approval, but he also rebuked Eban for his assumption that abstaining would not have given Israel any advantage: "Our negative voting cast a heavy shadow over our relations with China for the foreseeable future, gave the Arabs an advantage over us vis à vis China, harmed our friendly relations with Burma, made a bad impression on India, and displayed to the Scandinavian countries and the free public opinion, in Europe at least, our dependence on the United States." Consequently, he saw no alternative to giving a public explanation. (See Sharett to Eban, IWA851, 22 September 1954, 130.09/2310/7.)

In fact, on the same day, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesman made the following statement: The Israeli mission had received a briefing whose main thrust was not to vote against the admittance of the People's Republic of China to the U.N. Under the prevailing circumstances the mission had come to the conclusion as to how it should vote. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs questioned the wisdom of the initiative of raising the problem of changing China's representation in the U.N. at this time, in view of the absolute certainty of its failure, however it had not intended to give expression to this doubt by voting against. (File 130.02/2404,14.) The next day, Eytan instructed the Israeli legations in Eastern Europe, Scandinavia and Rangoon to meet with the Chinese representatives and to explain the Israeli vote in conformity with this announcement. (See the director-general's telegram, 23 September 1954, 130.09/2377/2.)

379. Z. Argaman (Moscow) to M. Bartur. 22 September 1954

Copy: 130.11/2512/1

Summary

He reports on trade negotiations with the Soviets.[1] There were obstacles in expanding trade. The Soviets' main grievance was that they were unable to find in the lists submitted by the Israelis goods suitable for their needs. They wished to trade with Israel to their mutual benefit, but in the meantime trade would be restricted to the purchase of citrus fruits and bananas and the sale of oil and oil products. This trade could be carried out within the framework of clearing agreements, and there was no need for a trade agreement. Argaman points out that the political aspect was undoubtedly decisive in the

Russian's restrictive attitude regarding trade (as it is in the area of cultural relations for example), although there are undoubtedly financial considerations. The current economic situation of the Soviet Union is such that it is unable to purchase imported goods other than those that are absolutely essential. It would seem therefore that trade relations between Israel and the Russians will remain at the previous level, although this does not mean that Israel should refrain from efforts to increase them.[2]

Notes

1. Argaman left in August for Moscow in order to negotiate the purchase of fuel and to explore the possibilities of increasing and diversifying exports to the Soviet Union, with the aim of incorporating the deal in a broader framework of a commercial agreement. Until then trade relations had been conducted within the framework of a clearing agreement between banks that had been signed in 1953 and made it possible to pay for Soviet goods with Israeli goods, and in particular with citrus fruit and bananas. In the framework of this agreement two contracts were signed, one, in December 1953, to the value of around $2.9 million dollars for the sale of citrus fruit and bananas, and the second, in February 1954, for the purchase of crude oil and fuel to a value of $3.6 million dollars, (See Bartur's report to the minister of foreign affairs, 9 August 1954, 130.11/2512.)
2. The attempt to expand and to diversify the trade with the Soviet Union was not successful. On 31 October 1954, three contracts were signed in Moscow for the supply of fuel and crude oil, and at the beginning of November a contract was signed for the sale of citrus fruit and bananas. All the contracts were signed within the framework of the clearing agreement of the banks, whose validity was extended until the end of 1955. (See Nedivi's memorandum to M. Elizur, 3 November 1954, 130.11/2512/1.)

   In summing up the negotiations in Moscow, Argaman wrote that in a more general conversation he had held after the completion of the oil deal, they had reiterated and stressed to him that the Soviet Union would be prepared to enter into negotiations for a trade agreement if Israel could supply it with essential goods. In his opinion, if Israel could find a way to supply such merchandise, it would also be able to market its industrial products, and therefore if Israel was interested in exporting its produce to the Soviet Union, then it would be worthwhile for Israel to look for the goods needed by the Soviet Union in other places as well. (See Argaman to the Economic Division, 5 December 1954, 130.11/2512/1.)

380. K. Katz (Budapest) to Sh. Bentsur. 22 September 1954

Coded Tel. 315; Inc.: 130.09/2295/10

Summary

Reports on a meeting at the Hungarian Foreign Ministry concerning immigration.[1] He had commended the decision to act liberally in individual cases, but this provided a solution only for individuals, while thousands of separated families wait in vain. He had stressed the economic and political advantages that permission for immigration would bring for Hungary. His words were listened to attentively and he was requested to submit a Note.[5]

Notes

1. Katz raised the subject of immigration when called on 21 September to Sik, the deputy minister of foreign affairs and acting foreign minister. Sik asked for Israel's support for having Hungary admitted to the U.N. (On this matter see also No. 401.) Katz recommended to Bentsur that the U.N. mission should become friendly with the Hungarian observer there. (See Katz to the M.F.A., No. 313, 21 September 1954, 130.09/2295/10.)
2. KEOK – the Hungarian Police centre for surveillance of foreigners.
3. See Vol. 8, No. 427.
4. The conversation with Dak, then the first secretary of the Israel legation in Budapest, was held on 23 February 1954. He was told that Hungary did not want a new immigration agreement and would only deal with emigration requests on an individual basis. (See telegram to the M.F.A., No. 248, 23 February 1954, 130.09/2295/10.)
5. Katz presented the letter concerning immigration and family reunification on 14 October. (See report on its delivery in File 130.11/2492/22.) At the end of December 1954, the director of the Middle East Department in the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced to the Israeli legation his government's decision to continue to issue individual passports, with the aim of expanding the framework in the future. (See memorandum on Israel-Eastern Europe relations in 1954, 15 February 1954, 93.39/544/1.)

381. W. Eytan [Jerusalem] to Major-General E.L.M. Burns (Jerusalem). 23 September 1954

Notes

1. See No. 352 and notes.
2. See No. 288.

382. E. Elath (London) to M. Sharett. 23 September 1954

Coded Tel. 978; 93.04/40/17

Summary

Elath adds to his telegram[1] concerning his meeting with Eden and stresses a number of points worth consideration:

1. The reference to talks between Israel and the Arabs in Eden's communiqué was included apparently at the initiative of the Foreign Office and Nuri Said. Apparently it had been given a cool reception by the Arab ambassadors who opposed the very idea of meeting with Israelis.

2. The next stage would depend on the outcome of the talks between Churchill and Eden with Nuri Said. It is to be expected that the Arab states will bring pressure to bear on Nuri to cause the initiative to fail.

3. He suggests that no initiative be taken regarding the "peace campaign" until Israel receives new and positive information from Eden following his meeting with Nuri

4. They should refrain from issuing over-optimistic statements.

5. He doubts the advantage of attempts at direct contact with Nuri who might exploit Israeli overtures for his own advantage. In the event that such a decision is taken, the person most suited would be Richard Crossman.[2]

6. It would seem that recognition is growing in the British Foreign Office regarding the necessity for an arrangement between Israel and the Arabs, without which no regional security plan could be implemented. There are some positive possibilities in this for Israel, but also the danger of attempts to impose a peace settlement.[3]

Notes

1. No. 375.
2. In an exchange of telegrams between them, Sharett instructed Elath to find a suitable prominent English personality to hold a conversation with Nuri al-Said with the aim of finding out what he had meant when he said that peace had to come between Israel and the Arabs and what lay behind his peace feelers. Elath suggested Crossman. (See Sharett to Elath, No. 298, 20 September 1954, 130.09/2320/1; Elath to Sharett, No. 970, 21 September 1954, 93.04/40/17).
3. In a later telegram Elath announced that Crossman had indeed undertaken the task of mediation. As to the intentions of Nuri Said, Elath wrote that, according to various sources, Nuri was aspiring to reach a settlement with the West and to promote the union of Iraq, Syria and Jordan, and he was convinced that to this end he had to overcome Israel's opposition. He had no clear plan for a settlement with Israel, but as a starting point he would try to base himself on the U.N. resolutions. He hoped that if he gave the Western powers the appearance of being moderate, and succeeded in convincing them of the sincerity of his peaceful intentions, he would move them to exert pressure on Israel. He assumed that the serious concessions he would obtain from Israel would in the end also convince the other Arab states to approve the settlement proposal. (See Elath's telegram to Sharett, No. 985, 24 September 1954, 93.04/40/17.)

383. E. Elath (London) to A. Eden (London). 24 September 1954

Notes

1. See No. 375.
2. See No. 374 (Editorial Note).
3. No. 376.

384. A. Eban (Washington) to G. Rafael. 26 September 1954

Notes

1. See No. 355 and n. 1.
2. Irian, that is Dutch New Guinea, remained a Dutch possession after the establishment of Indonesia in 1949. Indonesia, who sought to annex it, placed the issue on the agenda of the ninth session of the U.N. General Assembly. In a consultation held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 26 August (see No. 372 – Editorial Note) it was decided to support as a matter of principle the U.N.'s right to discuss the problem, and to call on the parties to negotiate; should there be a vote on

motions of substance, to abstain, in order not to join the colonialist countries opposed to annexation, and not to vote with Indonesia against the Netherlands.

3. Rafael replied that Eban's position was approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but he disagreed with the term "fully" which Eban had used regarding the support for Britain and the Netherlands. (See Rafael to Eban, No. 329, 1 October 1954, 93.01/2210/21.) Sharett agreed with Eban concerning the practical merits of the problem, and also was impressed by the constitutional arguments against giving authority to the Assembly to transfer territories from one sovereignty to another, but he did not accept the definition of Cyprus's aim as annexation when it expressed the will of a large majority of the population. (See his telegram to Eban, IW893, 1 October 1954, 130.09/2310/8.)

On 10 December, in the General Assembly plenum, a vote was held on the draft resolution that had been adopted in the first committee. In the draft resolution the Assembly expressed the hope that Indonesia and the Netherlands would make exhaustive efforts to resolve the conflict in accordance with the principles of the U.N. Charter and asked the two countries to report to the tenth session of the General Assembly on progress. Although this motion did gain a majority, it was not the required two thirds. Israel voted, together with Britain, France and the Netherlands, against the resolution. The United States abstained. (See *Yearbook of the United Nations*, 1954, pp. 56-60.)

385. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 26 September 1954

Coded Tel. 869; Outg.: 130.09/2310/7

Summary

Sharett returns to the issue of Israel's vote on the matter of China.[1] The Ministry regretted the complication, but the situation is as follows: no matter what the formulation may be, Israel's stand prior to the opening of the Assembly was on no account to take a negative attitude towards the admittance of China to the United Nations. Israel's vote had created a negative impression. Explanations that followed did not counteract this impression. As a result of the storm that this had caused in Israel, there was no choice but to explain what had happened. The argument that this or any other vote by Israel would not have had any effect on Peking, Rangoon, etc., is not acceptable to the Ministry. The Ministry's communiqué did not state that Israel voted against the admission of China to the United Nations, and in order to prevent a misunderstanding, he would explain in detail at his forthcoming press conference that the vote was procedural and did not relate to the merits of the case.[3]

Sharett ends by pointing out that the episode must be seen as a mishap that should have been prevented, but since it had occurred it should not be construed as a major catastrophe. Such mishaps are the result of the constant tension between the political pressures between which Israel has to steer, and it is a wonder that such mishaps are so rare.

Notes

1. See No. 378. Following the publication of the statement, Eban sent off to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a series of telegrams in which he continued to maintain that the ministry's reaction was excessive, and based on mistaken facts. The vote had been on a procedural matter, and not on the seating of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations. Israel's vote had not aroused any special emotion, surprise or criticism, even on the part of states like Burma and India. He expressed indignation over the publicity given to the dispute, and called on the Ministry to amend the public statement. (See Eban telegrams to Eytan, X119-X121, 22 September 1954, 93.01/2188/9.)
2. See the summary of Israel's voting in this affair during the eighth session of the General Assembly, (24 September 1954, 130.02/2404/14). According to this summary, in September 1953 Israel abstained in all the votes held in the Assembly: on the precedence of the vote on the United States motion to postpone the debate on the question of Chinese representation for the duration of the year 1953, on the Soviet Union's motion to change the Chinese representation, on the United States motion itself, and on the motion not to vote on the motion of the Soviet Union.
3. On 24 September, Sharett met with newspaper editors in Tel Aviv. He reacted mainly to the latest British step for reducing the tension between Israel and the Arabs, reported on the latest Israeli Note to Britain, and announced that he assumed that Israel would shortly be returning to the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission, after its chairman was replaced. Explaining the Israeli vote in the United Nations, he said the vote had been conducted on a procedural matter and many delegations maintained that they were expressing an opinion on the procedure and not on the issue itself. When the matter came up for discussion on its merits Israel would act according to the principle which it upheld – general admittance to the United Nations of all the states, provided that they met the criteria for it. (*Ha'aretz*, 26 September 1954.)

386. Editorial Note

Statement by the Government of Israel on the Release of the Remaining Blocked Accounts of the Arab Refugees

On 27 September 1954 the Government of Israel issued a statement on its readiness to continue releasing the remaining blocked accounts located in banks in Israel, belonging to absentee owners and to Arab refugees as well as

the valuables deposited in safes in those banks. This release came, it was stated in the announcement, following the decision taken in September 1952 to release a million pounds sterling from the total blocked accounts, from which thousands of refugees residing in Arab states had already benefited. The statement went on to say that the current release had been made possible as a result of a special arrangement for the supply of foreign currency which had been suggested to the Government of Israel by one of the banks involved. It also stated that the government was negotiating with the Palestine Conciliation Commission in order to establish procedures for implementing the plan, and would also consider for this purpose proposals put forward by the representatives of the depositors themselves.

On the previous day, 26 September, Rafael had signed in the name of the Government of Israel a secret agreement with the director-general of Barclays Bank in which Israel expressed its readiness to release all the accounts and deposits, and the bank had undertaken to give Israel credit of five million pounds sterling, three million of which were to finance the release of the accounts.

At the same time they had jointly drafted the above statement so that it would be published by agreement with the Conciliation Commission, but because of the Commission's opposition to the sentence referring to the representatives of the depositors, the U.N. mission issued the statement in Israel's name.

On 11 October, the Conciliation Commission issued a statement in reaction, in which it gave the contents of a letter it had sent to the governments of seven Arab states. In this letter it noted with satisfaction Israel's agreement to continue with the release of the accounts.

(See copy of the agreement between the Government of Israel and Barclays Bank, including the text of the statement to be published, 26 September 1954; reports to the Israel Missions Abroad, No. 958, 29 November 1954, 130.02/2451/19; see press release of the Government of Israel, 27 September 1954, 93.03/3065/11; U.N. announcement to the press, 11 October 1954, 93.03/3065/11.)

387. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington) and E. Elath (London). 27 September 1954

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2320/1

Summary

Sharett reports on a series of events along the Egyptian border, in the course of which three Israelis were killed.[1,2,3] Israel showed restraint in its desire to enable Burns and the United States to show their effectiveness in prevention. In the meantime there had been no results, but Israel had abstained from reprisal for the following reasons: if a reprisal were to be carried out it would be on a large scale;[4] to see what is the fate of the *Bat Galim;* so as not to be accused of breaking the peace momentum; because of the opening of the United Nations Assembly, and so as not to open another point of friction with Burns.[5] Thus, Israel must exploit its self-restraint, warn against Egyptian aggression, blame the United States for encouragement of Nasser, throw in the face of the Department of State its ineffectiveness in Cairo and warn them that Israel's patience is running out. Furthermore, a meeting should be held with Azmi during the course of which they should warn him that he should convince his government to take radical steps. If this meeting does take place and if in the meantime the story of the vessel is published, they could add that it would be wise in this situation for the Egyptians to allow the vessel to pass through the Canal without interference.[6]

Notes

1. On the night of 25 September,two residents of Beit Shiqma near Ashqelon were killed in an ambush by a group of five armed marauders who had infiltrated from the Gaza Strip. Two other residents were wounded. The Armistice Commission that discussed the incident on 2 October strongly condemned Egypt and noted with grave concern the deterioration over the past month in the situation along the line, that was a result of repeated aggressive acts by Egypt against Israel.
2. See No. 357 and n. 1.
3. The incident took place on the night between 20 to 21 September when a band of four men, which had infiltrated, so Israel claimed, from the Gaza Strip, wounded a tractor driver in the Gan Givati cooperative settlement and blew up a house with its residents in the Hatzav cooperative settlement near Gedera; two of the residents of the house were wounded. In a discussion held in the Armistice Commission, Israel's motion to condemn Egypt was not adopted, since the Commission Chairman abstained on the grounds of lack of proof of the attackers' identity. (See Shalev's memorandum on the Armistice Commission sessions on 2 October 1954, 130.02/2438/6.)

4. On the Chief of Staff's proposal for a large-scale reprisal action: a night time incursion into Gaza City in order to blow up a central government building there, or at least one of its wings, and Sharett's reaction, see M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. 2, p. 582 (Hebrew); Sharett's letter to Elath, Eban and Shiloah, 26 October 1954, ibid., pp. 591-596.
5. Dispute over the observers' border patrols – See No. 367 and notes.
6. The meeting with Azmi was set for 5 October, after the latter had made it conditional on absolute secrecy. Azmi did not appear at the meeting and explained it was for reasons beyond his control – he hinted that he was under surveillance by his colleagues who had prevented him appearing. He stressed that he was interested in meeting, but that it would be best to wait until the anger over the Bat Galim affair had subsided. They eventually agreed that in November they would set a date for the meeting. Azmi passed away on 3 November after fainting during his Security Council address. (See telegrams from Eban to Rafael, WIA938, WIA944, 1–2 October 1954, 93.01/2210/20; Rafael to Eban, IWA902, 4 October 1954.)

   Reacting to this telegram, Kidron of the Israel mission to the U.N., stated that they hoped that a reprisal raid would not be carried out on the Gaza border, which would undermine the political advantage Israel had gained by the detention of the *Bat Galim*, and that the mission strongly recommended continuing to exercise restraint to the extent possible. (See Kidron to the M.F.A., No. 153, 29 September 1954, 130.09/2331/13.)

388. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to E. Elath (London). 27 September 1954

Coded Tel. 331; Outg.: 130.09/2320/1

Summary

In a personal telegram to the Ambassador in London with a copy to Eban, Sharett states that he was most impressed with Gazit's evaluation[1] that Nuri Said considers that peace with Israel is a price worth paying for the creation of the Fertile Crescent. Without taking a stand on the matter itself, he believes that for the first time a distinct Arab interest in peace with Israel is being indicated. Thus, behind the scenes activities in this direction should be continued and he should be made aware that there are no possibilities of territorial concessions on the part of Israel, and it is even possible that Israel would demand territorial compensation, such as the abolition of the Syrian de-militarized zone and control of the sources of the Jordan River. He should be convinced that unification of Iraq with Jordan would not succeed because of the objection of Britain and Israel and he should rather be satisfied with unification with Syria. He should also be sold the idea of settling the

refugees in Syria and Iraq, including transferring them from Gaza and Jordan as a stimulus to development, with the assistance of the United States and Israel.[3]

Notes

1. Gazit reported the information he had received from the journalist Jon Kimche after the latter had talked with a Jordanian close to the Royal Court and living in London (Abd al-Ghani al Karmi) and with Fadil Jamali, the head of the Iraqi mission to the U.N., on the latest moves of the Arabs and Nuri Said's intentions in his peace initiative (see No. 382). According to Kimche, the Arabs were disappointed that the military and economic aid of the United States was being held up, and they were convinced that if they didn't exhibit moderation towards Israel they would not receive any real assistance. Nuri Said's idea was to act for a settlement that would be imposed from above and be executed by a third party – the U.N. or the Powers, and be based on U.N. resolutions. Nuri Said ascribed to the settlement an additional advantage – Israel could not then be opposed to Iraq's union with Syria and Jordan, and it would be easier for the Powers to endorse it. (See Gazit to the M.F.A., 23 September 1954, 130.02/2457/2; Gazit to Rafael, 24 September 1954, 130.15/3746/6.)
2. See No. 382, notes 2 and 3.
3. Elath replied that Nuri Said had refused to meet Crossman. He repeated his suggestion that it would be best to avoid direct feelers with Nuri and to leave him alone at this time. Nuri did not require explanations from Israel concerning the benefit he could derive from his plans, and tactically it would be better for Israel to wait for his initiative, which would apparently be forthcoming through Eden and not directly. (See telegrams from Elath to Sharett, Nos. 25, 27, 5 October 1954, 93.04/40/17.)

389. A. Eban [New York] to the President of the Security Council (New York). 28 September 1954

Notes

1. In a statement issued on the afternoon of 28 September, the Egyptian minister of information, Salih Salim, announced that in the morning of that same day an Israeli vessel had attacked a number of residents and fishermen with light weapons in the Red Sea area and wounded several of them. He noted that this was the first time that an Israeli ship had sailed into Egyptian territorial waters and carried out an attack of this nature, and that there was no doubt that the sole purpose of the attack was to arouse confusion and anxiety in the region in order to prevent a successful conclusion to the negotiation with Britain over the Suez Canal. He stressed that Egypt saw itself as being in a state of war with Israel and was not prepared to consider any change in its attitude so long as Israel did not abide by the U.N.

resolutions, and therefore it would not permit any Zionist to enter its territorial waters. (Text in Al Ahram, 29 September 1954, in File 130.02/2419/3.)

2. This letter was circulated among the Security Council members as U.N. Document S/3296. The Egyptian response, in the wording of the Egyptian minister of information, was also distributed among the Council members as U.N. document S/3297. In an additional letter, dated 30 September, the Egyptian representative added details on the alleged Israeli aggression, according to which the Israeli vessel had opened fire on two Egyptian fishing boats when it was in Egyptian territorial waters, between Abu Darag and Suez; one of the Egyptian fishing boats was sunk, and two Egyptian fishermen were missing. (See Azmi's letter to the president of the Security Council, 30 September 1954, U.N. Document S/3298.)

390. M. Kidron (New York) to W. Eytan. 30 September 1954

Notes

1. See No. 389 and notes.
2. The reference is to the Soviet veto which was cast in the vote in the Security Council on the freedom of passage through the Suez Canal – See No. 139 (Editorial Note).
3. See No. 367 (Editorial Note).
4. On 4 October, the secretary-general sent Kidron a copy of his telegram to Burns dated 29 September, in which he declared his unreserved support for his stand on the matter of the Observer patrols on the border; he dwelt on the legal argument based also on Article XI, clause 10, of the Armistice Agreement with Jordan, which guaranteed freedom of movement for the Observers; noted that Israel had not opposed this argument when the previous chief of staff of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization Bennike had raised it for the first time in the Security Council on 9 November 1953; and also gave commonsense considerations which in his opinion refuted the Israeli claim of violation of sovereignty. (See Kidron to the M.F.A., No. 182, 4 October 1954, 130.16/2947/6.)

391. Israel Embassy in Washington to the United States Division. 1 October 1954

Coded Tel. WIA932; Outg.: 93.01/2210/21

Summary

The embassy reports on Eban's meeting with Murphy. Eban reiterated the facts of the *Bat Galim* episode. He pointed out the ludicrous nature of the Egyptian argument[1] and stressed Israel's demand that the vessel be liberated

immediately and allowed to continue its voyage. He hinted that if the ship were freed, Israel would retract its demand for the convening of the Security Council. He also quoted the United Nations secretary-general's statement about the possibility of releasing the ship without convening the Security Council.[2] He added Israel's disappointment at the fact that there had been no improvement in relations with the Egyptians, neither along the borders, nor concerning freedom of navigation in the Canal, nor in the general atmosphere – despite commitments by the Americans. Murphy had not received any information from the U.S. embassy in Cairo, but stressed that as far as he knew there had been no change in the Egyptian attitude towards the blockade in the Canal. He did not see any obstacle in principle to taking action in Cairo for the liberation of the vessel and obtaining permission for it to continue on its way and undertook to take up the matter with the Department of State and inform the Israeli representatives accordingly.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 389 and notes.
2. See No. 390.
3. The next day Eban explained that the conversation had not yielded any commitment to the Department of State not to convene the Security Council: no assurance was given to refrain from convening the Council in exchange for the promise of the United States government to act in Cairo; all that was said was that if the ship was freed at once, Israel would carefully consider its position, and even if this were the case, it wasn't stated that it would refrain from raising the question in principle. (See his telegram to the United States Division, W1A943, 2 October 1954, 93.01/2210/21.) See also No. 394.

392. E. Elath (London) to M. Sharett. 1 October 1954

Coded Tel. 7; Outg.: 93.04/40/14

Summary

Elath visited Shuckburgh as requested to discuss the *Bat Galim* episode.

Before discussing the Bat Galim episode, Shuckburgh told him that it had been decided to publish a statement in keeping with his proposals contained in item 2 of his telegram 977 (No. 375).[2] Elath replied that the Israeli government and public opinion would welcome such a statement.

As for the *Bat Galim*, Shuckburgh said that they continued to support the principle of the right of freedom of navigation. The line they followed in

their negotiations with the Egyptians was not to introduce other matters while negotiating the main issue – namely their military bases there.[5] When these negotiations are completed, they will be able to bring their influence to bear on Egypt on matters relating to Israel, on the assumption that the Egyptians would then be more moderate and sensible. There are already some signs of this. Elath rejected this outright and brought up as an example, in addition to the *Bat Galim* episode, recent proclamations by Nasser and Salim[6] as well as the situation along the border.[7] Shuckburgh made no direct comment on the *Bat Galim* episode, but from various remarks he made during Elath's discourse it was evident that he accepted the Israeli version of the affair.[8]

In the course of the meeting, a note was handed to Shuckburgh, which he explained had been written by the Foreign Secretary's personal secretary. Shuckburgh read out the note:

> "The Secretary is anxious we should think up some icebreaking gesture, however small, from either side. You could perhaps sound the ambassador informally as to what we might ask the Arabs to do."

Elath replied that he considered Eden's proposal to be serious and did not want to react without consultation. He promised to send a reply as soon as possible.[10]

Shuckburgh then asked what was Israel's evaluation of prospects of peace with the Arabs. Elath's reply was in accordance with the directives in Rafael's telegram,[11] and Shuckburgh noted it down. Shuckburgh asked if Israel would be prepared, in return for Arab recognition of the area allocated to Israel by the United Nations partition resolution, to hold negotiations about the area Israel had conquered beyond the partition borders determined by the U.N. Elath replied that Israel would not be prepared for territorial concessions apart from mutual border adjustments that would be accepted by both sides in the course of negotiations on all the issues in dispute. He stressed that the Arabs had no legal or moral right to demand changes in the situation, for the creation of which they in fact were responsible, since events had taken place over the years in the areas that were originally supposed to be part of the Arab state. Shuckburgh did not comment on this.[12]

At the end of the meeting, Shuckburgh announced his intention to visit Israel in November, prior to attending the conference of British representatives in the region which was to take place in Beirut.[13]

Notes

1. In this telegram Sharett instructed Elath to officially inquire at the British Foreign Office about the reaction of the Arab states to the British proposal to help in advancing peace. (26 September 1954, 93.04/40/17.)

2. See No. 375.
3. See there, n. 7.
4. No. 376.
5. On the signing of the agreement between Britain and Egypt – see No. 422 (Editorial Note).
6. See No. 279 and n. 1, No. 301 and n. 2.
7. See No. 387 and notes.
8. Also Hanbury-Tenison, in charge of Suez Canal matters in the British Foreign Office, in a conversation he had with Gazit on 30 September, dismissed the Egyptian version of the *Bat Galim* incident, but argued that the Israeli initiative was superfluous and also expressed indignation over its timing, which could raise last-minute obstacles to the signing of their agreement with Egypt. (See Elath to the M.F.A., No. 1000, 1 October 1954, 130.09/2320/2.)
9. No. 374 (Editorial Note.)
10. Lourie instructed Elath to reply that Israel was not asking for a positive step from the Arabs, but that the Jordanians and Egyptians should put an end to the acts of provocation and aggression, and as a matter of immediacy: allowing freedom of passage in the Suez Canal to the *Bat Galim* by the Egyptians, and the return of the stolen herd of Kibbutz Ein Hashofet by the Jordanians (see No. 408, n. 10). He must point out that Israel had for an entire month imposed on itself an iron discipline of restraint, in spite of the steadily increasing number of violent incidents on both the Egyptian and the Jordanian borders, and to make it clear that they could not continue indefinitely without reaction. As for the matter of the goodwill gesture, Israel had just now announced the unblocking of the remaining blocked accounts of the refugees. (See telegrams 372, 375, 4-5 October 1954 both in File 130.09/2320/1.)
11. This telegram was not traced in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs files, but from a record of the conversation made by the British it emerges that Elath proposed a series of possible gestures on Israel's part: freedom of transit for Jordanian goods to the Haifa port, the possibility of a free port in Haifa, and also perhaps free passage between Jordan and Egypt, as well as arrangements in the economic sphere and in such matters as the distribution of the Jordan River waters. At the same time he said that Israel would not make territorial concessions, although it would be prepared to discuss border adjustments and to grant economic aid for the resettlement of the refugees as compensation for their property. (See record of Elath's conversation with Shuckburgh, PRO, FO371/111075, 4 October 1954.)
12. See also Nos. 393, 398.
13. On Shuckburgh's visit in Israel see No. 498 and n. 1.

393. E. Elath (London) to M. Sharett. 1 October 1954

Coded Tel. 6; Inc.: 130.09/2320/2

Summary

Elath raises some points arising out of his meeting with Shuckburgh.[1]

The fact that the British were prepared to issue a statement in the manner he had proposed, is an indication of their desire to create a cordial atmosphere which could be exploited later for mediation between Israel and the Arabs. If the statement contains what he had requested, he would consider it an important achievement.

The conclusion that can be deduced from Shuckburgh's comments regarding Egypt is that the British will not be prepared to act to improve relations between Israel and the Egyptians even after the submission of Israel's last Note.[2] The Note sent by Eden reveals his attitude towards peace apparently following upon his recent meetings with Nuri Said. It is to be presumed that they will present this question to the Arab ambassadors as well.

Shuckburgh's soundings concerning the territorial issue confirms information held by Israel. It heralds the "Trieste tactics" mentioned by Eden in his conversation,[4] and which the Foreign Office is beginning to examine in detail.

Notes

1. No. 392.
2. No. 376.
3. See No. 388 and notes.
4. See No. 208 and note 4.

394. A. Eban (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2 October 1954

Coded Tel. WIA942; Outg: 93.01/2210/21

Summary

Eban replies to the telegram from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs[1] and agrees that a request be made to convene the Security Council. It should be made clear that Israel is referring to the issue of the blockade in general and

not just the recent episode. If it becomes apparent that there are prospects for Murphy's efforts in Cairo,[3] Israel will request a two-day postponement to see what results transpire. As for tactics to be followed in the Security Council debate, he proposes approaching the Soviets to see if they would be prepared not to obstruct a Security Council resolution for the implementation of the previous resolution [of 1951]. If their reply is positive, then the former New Zealand proposal[4] should be raised, with the addition of instructions to release the vessel. If their reply is negative, efforts must be made to persuade the majority of the speakers to stress the right of free navigation and the creation of a positive stand, without a vote being taken.[5]

Notes

1. This is Eban's reply to Rafael's telegram, which stated that in the ministry's view the time had come to call for the convening of the Security Council concerning the detention of the *Bat Galim*, and that from the procedural point of view Israel was not required to lodge a complaint, since the debate on the previous complaint on the subject of the Suez blockade still had not ended. He wished to know what Eban's opinions were on this matter, especially after his conversation in the Department of State. (Telegram IWA895, 1 October 1954, 130.09/2310/8.)
2. He is apparently alluding to the complaint lodged by Israel to the Security Council in summer 1953 concerning the freedom of passage in the Suez Canal, in the matter of the detention in Port Said of the Greek vessel *Parnon* which was carrying cargo to Israel. See Vol. 8, Nos. 367, 368. The complaint did not come up for debate in the Council.
3. See No. 391.
4. See No. 139 (Editorial Note).
5. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs they agreed to paragraphs 1, 2, and 4; in reply to paragraph 3 they reassured Eban "that only the captain had a pistol and that the *Bat Galim* had not fired." (See telegram from Eytan to Eban, E723, 3 October 1954, 93.01/2210/21; telegrams from Rafael to Eban, IWA903, 4 October 1954, 130.09/2310/8; No. 482, 5 October 1954, 130.09/2331/6.)

395. A. Eban (New York) to the President of the Security Council. 4 October 1954

Notes

1. No. 45.
2. See No. 54 (Editorial Note).
3. No. 389.
4. This document was registered as Security Council document No. S/3300. On the beginning of the debate in the Security Council see No. 412 (Editorial Note.)

396. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 5 October 1954

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2320/1

Summary

Eytan sets out the explanatory line to be taken by Israel in the Security Council concerning the *Bat Galim* episode.

1. The sending of the vessel was not a provocation. The sending of so small a vessel with a small crew to an Egyptian port was a peaceful act and not a hostile one.

2. Israel considered the occasion of the signing of the agreement between Britain and Egypt an event that constituted a substantial political achievement for Egypt, and considered this a suitable time to take steps to improve relations.

3. Israel did not in any way try to sabotage the Anglo-Egyptian agreement; on the contrary, it was the certainty that the agreement would be signed that prompted Israel to act.

4. The Egyptians chose to transform a legal act by Israel into a dispute. Israel has no choice but to guarantee its rights by applying to the Security Council.

5. Israel took a number of conciliatory steps: freeing blocked accounts; its reply to Selwyn Lloyd's statement;[1] restraint along the border; Rafael's broadcast to the Arabs.[2] All these attest to the intent to follow a positive policy.

6. The contrast between the friendly and spontaneous attitude of the customs and health officials in Egypt and that of Salim should be emphasized.

Finally, he states that Israel had approached the Red Cross to ensure the safety of its men in Egypt.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 374 (Editorial Note) and No. 375.
2. Refers to Rafael's broadcast on "Kol Israel" (the Voice of Israel) in the Arabic language on 25 September. Rafael said that the on-going debate in Arab states on the problem of peace and the improvement of relations with Israel was an extremely important issue and Israel was following it with great interest. He recalled that the prime minister had lately announced that Israel was determined to begin to implement a practical program to give compensation to the refugees, and observed that this program could have begun to be implemented much sooner had the

refugees themselves made their voices heard to the Arab politicians. He noted, in reply to Nasser's remarks, that the Negev was an integral part of Israel, and that it was not imperative that Israel, and particularly the Negev, should constitute a wedge between Egypt and the rest of the Arab states, but on the contrary, it could serve as a bridge and connector between them, and that a plan could be worked out that would make the passage of traffic possible in the area without violating Israel's sovereignty. In the same context, he mentioned Israel's preparedness to grant Jordan a free zone in the Haifa port and transit rights for its produce. (See the summary of the conversation with Rafael, 93.04/40/14.)

3. On 4 October Eytan instructed the Israeli minister in Berne to immediately contact the president of the International Red Cross and to request that his representative in Cairo check the condition of the crew of the *Bat Galim*, and to take them under his protection. (See Eytan's telegram, No. 268, 4 October 1954, 130.02/2453/4.)

397. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to G. Avner (London). 5 October 1954

Orig.: 93.04/39/21

Summary

Tekoah continues the previous correspondence concerning the Armistice Agreement situation, reprisal actions, and information activities about them.[1] He deals with the complaints raised by Avner, point by point. He states that it is not always possible to control the extent of reprisals as planned, and there is no guarantee that limited and concentrated activities would have the same impact as a large-scale operation. He admits that the description of reprisals as unofficial is fictitious, but no decision has yet been taken to describe these activities as the official policy of Israel. The question of relations between Israel and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization is a painful subject. In his opinion, the U.N. should deal with the investigation of incidents, by discussions, by assisting the parties to implement the agreement, but should not participate in patrols along the border. He suggests that Rafael should refer to the government decision in this vein. He hopes that his explanations will at any rate help to give a more convincing picture of the situation.[6]

Notes

1. In File 130.02/2399/1. Avner responded to Tekoah's letters to him and Arnon, regarding the armistice and the reprisal raids, which were in answer to his letter – see No. 346 and notes.

   In paragraph 1 in his letter Avner reiterated his warning that whilst he was fully aware of the fact that the reprisal operations were dictated by reality, they must try to limit their scope because of their harmful effect on the relationship with Britain, because of the latter's special relationship with Jordan, and the repercussions they had on the issue of procurement and other matters raised by Israel in its last Note to Britain.

   In paragraph 2, Avner noted that Israel had admitted in fact in several cases that the reprisal raids were carried out by the I.D.F., and this was how the United States and Britain also regarded them, and therefore there was no point in continuing to maintain the fiction of spontaneous reprisal raids. What was important was to ensure that the scope of the operation should not markedly exceed the damage done to Israel. "A tooth for a tooth" one could explain, but not ten teeth for one.

   In paragraph 3, Avner expressed doubt, basing himself on information provided by Eban, about the claim that the infiltrations had decreased as a result of the reprisal raids.

   In paragraph 4, Avner referred to the question of relations with the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization, and argued that it was best not to become involved in a clash with this organization and its commander even if there was a fear of violation of sovereignty, as with the demands to avoid manoeuvres close to the border or to agree to allow Observer patrols in order to prevent incidents. It was impossible to explain Israel's refusal on these issues: and it was clear that the Powers and Israel's friends would support the U.N. personnel in these demands. In fact it was sabotaging the attempts to improve the situation on the border and created the impression that Israel had something to hide.
2. No. 381.
3. See No. 301 and notes.
4. See N. 367 and n. 4.
5. Comments on the state of the armistice and the borders which Tekoah cabled to Elath, at the request of the director-general, in advance of Elath's conversation with Eden. (No. 292, 20 September 1954, 93.04/40/14.)
6. Avner remained firm in his opinion that the scope of the reprisal raids should be as limited as possible, since their effectiveness in the security area was not clear, whilst the political damage resulting from a major operation was certain. On the other hand, smaller operations could be explained. He was against every attempt to restrict the movements of the Observers, and argued that such action weakened Israel's demand to purchase arms and the arguments justifying it were unconvincing. (See Avner to Tekoah, 15 October 1954, 130.02/2399/1.)

398. E. Elath (London) to M. Sharett. 5 October 1954

Coded Tel. 23-24; Outg.: 93.04/40/14

Summary

Elath sends some additional evaluations of his meeting with Shuckburgh.[1]

The successful conclusion of the London Conference and the solution to the Trieste problem, to a large extent the result of Eden's efforts, raised the reputation of Britain and especially of Eden personally, and encouraged his desire to solve the Palestine problem. Churchill's support and the encouragement he had received from Nuri Said constituted an additional incentive to this process. No matter what the results of Eden's initiative are, Israel must take a constructive stand. This is essential as regards relations with Eden and his government as well as public opinion in Britain, which is currently extremely sensitive about what appears to them as lack of consideration for the international needs and interests of the free world. In any event, Israel must guard its vital interests and act in a manner that would not make it easy for the Arabs to profit tactically. It must also be taken into account that every demand made by Israel will necessitate making concessions to the Arabs, and Israel's participation in the effort to "break the ice" will force it to conduct negotiations through a third party, in the spirit of the "Trieste tactics", as hinted at by Eden during their conversation.[2]

He thus believes that Israel should not immediately reject Eden's proposal, despite the inherent dangers. However, he should be asked for details of the Arab gesture to be made in exchange for an Israeli gesture, as he had requested. For example, he could state that in exchange for a cessation of Arab economic warfare, Israel would be prepared immediately to grant the right of passage for Jordanian goods through Haifa port.

Notes

1. See No. 393.
2. See No. 375.
3. Sharett's answer see No. 408.

399. Editorial Note

Eban's Speech in the Plenary Meeting of the U.N. General Assembly on 6 October 1954

Eban made a speech at the plenary session of the U.N. General Assembly on 6 October within the framework of the general debate, and the main point of his speech was the suggestion to sign non-aggression agreements between Israel and the Arab states. The idea of raising such a suggestion had been brought up before this in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (see Nos. 197, 199) and had been reinforced after the British declaration about mediating between Israel and the Arab states (see No. 374, Editorial Note). This time it had been decided that the appropriate platform for such a political statement was the U.N. General Assembly. (See Sh. Rosenne to J.Robinson, 26 September 1954, 130.02/2404/14.)

Eban began by saying that the Government of Israel had authorized him to suggest the signing of agreements between Israel and the Arab states which would obligate the parties to follow a policy of non-aggression and the peaceful settlement of problems. These agreements would represent a preliminary stage, or a transition stage, towards peace agreements, and would dissipate the steadily growing tension and suspicion between Israel and its neighbours. In these agreements each party would undertake to respect the territorial integrity and independence of the other party, to avoid any hostile act of a military, economic or political nature, and to settle by peaceful means all current disputes or those which would arise in the future. Eban called on the Powers to maintain the delicate balance of forces in the region and to avoid violating it to Israel's disadvantage and to abstain from an arms race, which would increase the danger of renewed attack. (See *GAOR, 9th session,* 491st Plenary meeting, 6 October 1954.)

400. Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 6 October 1954

Coded Tel. 146; Inc.: 130.09/2326/2

Summary

In keeping with a directive from Israel,[1] he had met with Zorin and asked him about the Soviet Union's stand in the Security Council deliberations on the *Bat Galim* episode. He stressed the fantastic nature of the Egyptian

version. He added that it was not only the specific episode of the *Bat Galim* which was in question, but rather the general issue of the principle of freedom of navigation through waterways and gulfs. Zorin listened, and said that he would examine the facts, but made no commitment, although Eliashiv considered that the criticism of the Egyptian version had somehow made an impact.

Notes

1. Levavi instructed the ambassador in Moscow to contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs there and to find out, at the same time as Eban was attempting to glean information from the Soviet mission to the U.N., if they were intending to use their right of veto again in the Security Council debate on Israel's demand for the release of the *Bat Galim*. Eliashiv was asked to remind them that the cargo in the ship, namely food, had until now passed through the Canal without any problems, and also to refute the Egyptian version that the ship was armed and that shots had been fired from it. (See telegram No. 95, 4 October 1954, 130.09/2326/1.)
2. In the debate at the beginning of the year on the Suez blockade – See No. 139 (Editorial Note).

401. A. Levavi (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 6 October 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2404/14

Summary

Levavi reports to the minister on conclusions reached in the course of consultations concerning the admission of new members to the United Nations:[1]

1. In the event that there is a procedural vote on whether to take a bloc vote on all the applicant countries, or on each country individually, Israel would vote for the individual vote.

2. If the decision is for a bloc vote, Israel would approve the principle of a universal admission but would express its reservations regarding Jordan (it is doubtful whether it is a peace-seeking country, clause 35[2]) and regarding Romania (its attitude towards immigration and the imprisonment of Zionist activists[3]).

3. If the vote is on an individual basis, Israel would vote for all the countries except Romania and Libya (Israel would abstain) and Jordan (Israel would oppose).

4. After the vote, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs representative will publish explanations in the press.

5. Prior to the vote, Ministry of Foreign Affairs representatives would inform Hungary and Bulgaria that Israel intends to vote for them. In Hungary, a statement would be added to this announcement that Israel hopes a solution will be found to the problem of immigration from that country.[4]

Notes

1. The consultation was held on the same day. Prior to that, Bentsur had reported that there had been approaches from Hungary and Bulgaria to support their applications for admission to the United Nations. (See Bentsur to Levavi, 1 October 1954; consultation on admitting new members to the U.N., 6 October 1954, 130.02/2404/14.)
2. See No. 202 (Editorial Note), and No. 229.
3. See No. 286.
4. Sharett agreed to all the paragraphs.

   In the vote held on 23 November in the Assembly plenum on the issue of admission of new members to the U.N., the draft resolution recommended by the Assembly's Ad Hoc Political Committee was adopted unanimously, namely to return to the Security Council the requests that were still pending, for further study and positive recommendations, and to ask the Committee of Good Offices, which had been set up for this purpose at the last Assembly session, to continue with its efforts. Other draft resolutions, submitted by Argentina, Cuba and El Salvador, calling for the admission of Austria, Ceylon, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Libya, Nepal and Portugal, together with an American amendment on the admission of Korea and Vietnam, and a Soviet motion, on a similar list of states with the addition of Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Mongolia, were not submitted to the vote at all. (See *Yearbook of the United Nations*, 1954, pp. 26-30.)

402. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the United States Division. 8 October 1954

Coded Tel. WIA953; Outg.: 93.01/2210/21

Summary

Eban had spoken to Dulles about problems in the Middle East, including the disturbance of the balance of power, the lack of security guarantees for Israel, and the Arab policy of blockade and hostility.

Dulles, who held a brief in his hand (although during the course of the conversation he claimed that he had not yet read it properly), stated that

since his last meeting with Eban there had not been any deterioration of the situation as regards Israel. Egypt had not received arms and the matter of the Suez Canal blockade was being dealt with in Cairo. He promised that during the final stages of negotiations on the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement reference would be made to the issue of free navigation through the Suez Canal. He asked whether a reaffirmation of the Three Power Declaration and strengthening it would reduce Israel's apprehensions. Eban immediately replied in the negative and pointed out the non-committal character of the Declaration, which is no guarantee of security, whereas the Arab states were bound by a series of pacts and military agreements.

The secretary then turned to Byroade, who participated in the meeting, and asked whether he considered it would be appropriate to read to Eban the draft Byroade had prepared consisting of a number of ideas that might perhaps put Israel's mind at rest. Following are the points of the draft:

1. A declaration of the traditional friendship of the United States towards all the countries and peoples of the region.

2. Employment of United States influence in the region to speed up and encourage the settling of conflicts; the attainment of final peace between Israel and the Arab countries would serve as the main aim of U.S. policy.

3. The countries of the region should be strengthened to enable them to resist the Communist threat. This process should not be delayed until peace between Israel and the Arabs was attained; however, the United States hopes for the cooperation of Israel and the Arab countries by resolving the conflict between them by peaceful means.

4. The United States declares that it would ensure that arms provided to strengthen the countries of the region would not be used for aggressive purposes and, in the event of Arab attacks against Israel or vice versa, the United States would cut off aid and use every means to prevent and suppress such aggression.

Eban replied that these points were less than the minimum Israel had expected. They contained no hint at a change in political or military processes begun by the United States government, nor was there any undertaking not to disturb the balance of arms supplies.

Dulles replied that the draft did not set Israel apart from the countries of the region that would be strengthened, even if this were not stated specifically. He added that an examination that had been made did not reveal any recent change for the worse in the balance of power. He was convinced that Israel was not facing any danger. Byroade added that in his opinion the apprehension of Israeli leaders was unfounded. The United States' main aim was to devote itself to finding a solution to the Arab-Israel conflict. Eban replied to these comments sharply. Dulles ended the meeting by saying that Eban's attitude was clear to him. He would review the draft while keeping in

mind Eban's objections. He suggested that talks on the draft continue with Hoover and Byroade.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 359.
2. Cf. also Bergus's memorandum on the conversation – *FRUS 1952-54*, Vol. IX, (part 1), No. 905. Eban was very disappointed with the conversation. In a telegram to the United States Division he noted that "the central conclusion from today's conversation is of an accelerated opening of all the floodgates, with all momentum, this week and next, both as regards public action, and also the action of friends and in particular of election candidates...". (telegram WIA955, 8 October 1954, 93.01/2210/21.) In a telegram to Sharett, he announced that he had forwarded to Dulles a personal and very forceful letter of disappointment and anxiety (No. 403), and compared his remarks in earlier conversations with the hollow and insubstantial content of the draft that was presented to him the same day. He explained that he had found it necessary to take this urgent action, even before consulting with the Ministry, because every hour was precious, and if they did not introduce basic corrections in the draft immediately, Israel would in the coming week be facing failure of the negotiations. (See Eban to Sharett, telegram 954, 8 October 1954, 130.09/2310/12.)

403. A. Eban [Washington] to J. F. Dulles (Washington). 8 October 1954

Notes

1. See No. 402.
2. See Nos. 313, 321.
3. See No. 359.
4. Dulles replied that he had read Eban's letter carefully and he appreciated its candour. He was continuing to give the matter his personal attention and hoped for a continuation of the conversations regarding Israel's problems. However, since a number of the topics that had arisen in the conversations had found their way to the press and had been inserted into the election campaign, he therefore considered it best that the substantive discussions on these questions should be left until the atmosphere calmed down. (See Dulles to Eban, 18 October 1954, 130.02/2456/16.)

404. A. Eban (Washington) to G. Rafael. 8 October 1954

Coded Tel. WIA956; Outg.: 93.01/2210/21

Summary

Eban cables to say that it is quite clear to him that the sending of one vessel will not solve the problem of freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal, which should rather be dealt with as a matter of principle. Thus, in his opinion, there is no alternative but to dispatch another ship as soon as possible and that such a vessel should preferably pass from north to south. The Egyptians will not be able to argue once more that a sea battle had taken place, and Israel will also be able to make it clear that there is no escape from finding a solution in principle.[1]

Notes

1. Even before he received this telegram, Sharett had written to the director-general of the Ministry in the same vein, and noted that they should take care to have a U.N. Observer or group of newsmen present on the deck, so that the Egyptians would not be able to come up with a fabrication. In his telegram to Eban containing these remarks, Sharett added that it was not an easy undertaking, and that in any case they should wait to see how things turned out in the U.N. Observers' investigation and in the Security Council regarding the *Bat Galim* episode. (See Sharett to the director-general, 8 October 1954, 130.02/2419/23; Sharett to the Israel embassy in Washington, telegram 937, 11 October 1954, 130.09/2310/8.)

405. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington.[1] 9 October 1954

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2345/8

Summary

Tekoah reports on the latest developments in the *Bat Galim* episode. The Egyptians had submitted a complaint to the Mixed Armistice Commission, and Burns had agreed to their request to send observers to carry out an investigation in the Canal.[2] The complaint related to shots fired, and not to the general issue of freedom of navigation. As a consequence, Israel has decided to submit a counter complaint, in accordance with the clause in the Armistice Agreement, stating that the Egyptian complaint is groundless. Israel will demand an emergency meeting of the Commission and an investigation on the Israeli side as well.[3,4]

Notes

1. Also sent to the Israeli missions in London, Paris and Rome.
2. The Egyptian complaint was lodged on 6 October and repeated the claim that the *Bat Galim* crew had attacked two Egyptian fishing boats inside Egyptian territorial waters, had sunk one of them, and caused the death of two Egyptian fishermen. Following the Egyptian complaint, a team of U.N. Observers was sent to investigate in Egypt.
3. Israel presented its demand to convene the Commission in emergency session on 8 October.
4. On the details of the discussion on the Egyptian complaint – see No. 442 and notes 5-6.

406. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 11 October 1954

Coded Tel. 933; Outg.: 130.09/2310/8

Summary

Following the series of meetings with Dulles,[1] it had become evident that there was no change in American policy and the pace of implementation is dependent more on the willingness of the Arabs to cooperate than Israeli pressure. In such a situation there is no point in haggling with Byroade on details of the draft, because there is no possibility of real change, and for minor changes there is no point in committing themselves to involvement in drawing it up. This is the decision of the government. Even so, perhaps it would be worthwhile to send envoys to Dulles to put him on the right track and especially to bring him to give a specific undertaking not to change the balance of arms. Sharett himself does not believe that at this stage it is possible to bring about a change in the American policy and it would be better not to indulge in making changes in formulation that will not be significant, and could only create the impression of substantive change.

Notes

1. See No. 403 and notes.
2. Eban had already been active in this connection. On 11 October, Proskauer dispatched a forceful letter to Dulles in which he expressed the hope that the planned declaration would cover Israel's minimum demands: confirmation that the United States did not intend to begin with plans for military aid which could significantly upset the balance of power between the Arab states and Israel; that the

legislation enabling the United States to give military aid would also apply to Israel as well as to the Arab states; a declaration that the United States would not permit the weapons it was giving to be used for aggressive purposes, and that it stood firmly by the Three Power Declaration of 1950 and would oppose any attempt to change the borders by force. (See Proskauer to Dulles, 11 October 1954, 130.02/2456/16.)

407. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 11 October 1954.

Coded Tel. 934; Outg.: 130.09/2310/8

Summary

The Division raises a number of observations following the meeting between Eban and Dulles.[1]

1. The decisive question is whether there is any truth in Dulles' assertion that he had still not delved into the matter in detail and was still at the stage of examining Byroade's proposal.

2. Byroade's unfortunate draft, apart from retreating from suggestions made at the first meeting with Dulles, is faulty in that there is a basic contradiction between clauses 4 and 5.

3. If the answer to point 1 is positive, then one can discern a tiny ray of light in this draft, in that for the first time the United States government declares that it is considering the supply of military aid on a small scale only. Worthy of note is the secretary's comment on "maintaining equality, and the question is to find the correct formulation." This is an admission that Israel is not satisfied with the Three Power Declaration.

The Division proposes to exploit the secretary of state's vacation to send him one or two friends of Israel in order to balance out the influence of the officials. There is, of course, the danger that such an act could complicate matters for Israel and damage its ability to bring pressure to bear. However, on the other hand, there is the fear that during the course of his vacation the officials would influence him, and the next meeting would be useless.[2]

Notes

1. No. 402.
2. Eban replied that in his estimation the secretary of state had spoken candidly, that is to say, he was not familiar with the document; the author of the draft was Jernigan and not Byroade. Eban mentioned once more his angry personal letter to Dulles (No.

403), and Proskauer's letter to Dulles (See No. 406, n. 2). He added that Shiloah would be giving a detailed report on the actions being taken. (See Eban to the United States Division, WIA968, 12 October 1954, 93.01/2210/21.)

408. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to E. Elath (London). 11 October 1954

Coded Tel. 409; Outg.: 130.09/2320/1

Summary

Sharett reacts to Elath's telegram concerning the British mediation initiative.[1] He points out that despite the self-restraint Israel had imposed on itself along the borders since 1 September and despite other gestures and conciliatory talks, the borders are not quiet[2] (proof of this being the series of acts of aggression, the detention of the *Bat Galim* and others); there were also the hostile statements made by the Arabs. Israel can now call with a quiet conscience for a mutual cessation of hostilities along the borders, which would create a positive climate that would allow exploration of possibilities of contact. Certainly, let the British become involved in attaining complete tranquillity along the border that would last for a specific period and bear fruit. Thus, it is his conclusion that in the existing situation it is more practical to establish facts along the borders and not an exchange of declarations.[11]

Notes

1. No. 398.
2. See No. 387 and notes 1 and 3.
3. See No. 374 (Editorial Note).
4. See No. 396 and n. 2.
5. See No. 386 (Editorial Note).
6. See No. 399 (Editorial Note).
7. The Israeli delegation renewed its participation in the meetings of the Israel-Jordan Armistice Commission on 20 October 1954, after Hutchison's departure and Lieutenant-Commander Brewster taking up the post of Commission chairman.
8. Refers to the speech made by King Saud at a dinner he gave on 6 August in honour of the representatives of the Arab states and the Moslem countries who came to participate in the All-Moslem Conference in Mecca. In his speech, he described Israel as a cancerous growth in the heart of the Arab world, which had to be uprooted. (*Ha'aretz*, 9 August 1954.)

9. Jamali, the Iraqi representative, who was the first speaker at the general debate in the U.N. Assembly on 27 September, accused Israel of seeking to incite the Arabs to an open struggle. He urged the Powers to suspend giving aid to Israel until it agreed to comply with the U.N. resolutions and to stop firing at innocent Arabs. (See *GAOR, Ninth Session, Plenary Meetings*, 479th Meeting, 27 September 1954, pp. 78-81.)
10. The reference is to the herd of Kibbutz Ein Hashofet which numbered 480 prime head of sheep and was stolen by the Jordanians on 27 September while grazing in Israeli territory close to the Armistice line. The herd was returned only on 9 October following the intervention of the Chief of Staff of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization Burns and the British chargé d'affaires Moore in Jordan, at the demand of Sharett. Sharett used the services of these officials after the Chief of Staff Dayan had pressed to occupy a Jordanian village for a few hours and to seize a Jordanian herd as a counteraction. Sharett was opposed to this, because he was afraid of casualties among the I.D.F. soldiers and the villagers – and not least, turning Israel which was then at the height of the *Bat Galim* campaign, from plaintiff to defendant in the Security Council, and he asked to first of all to exhaust all the other possibilities. (See M. Sharett, *Personal Diary*, Vol. II, pp. 591-596 [Hebrew]; telegrams from Sharett to Eban and Elath, 2 October 1954, 130.09/2310/8.)
11. In reaction Elath asked Sharett to reconsider his instruction to invite the British to "become deeply involved in order to impose total quiet on the border" etc., in order to satisfy Eden's aspirations, which had been conveyed to Elath during his conversation with Shuckburgh (See No. 392), to do something on his initiative "to break the ice". In his view Eden had been contemplating a one-time goodwill gesture, something akin to the proposal of granting rights in Haifa Port or, if Israel wished to confine its offer to matters arising from the Armistice Agreement, readiness to discuss exchange of lands and ways to improve the lot of the villagers cut off from their lands in Israel, in exchange for Jordan's agreement to demarcate the border and to erect fences. Elath added that a reply in the spirit of Sharett's directive would be interpreted as a rejection of Eden's initiative, and would amount to a grave tactical error regarding the matter in hand, particularly in view of the complex state of relations with the United States which necessitated preserving closer ties with Britain. (See Elath to Sharett, telegram 656, 130.09/2320/2.) See also No. 421, and n. 1.

409. M. Kidron (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 12 October 1954

Coded Tel. 220; Inc.: 130.09/2381/13

Summary

In preparation for the debate on Israel's complaint over the detention of the *Bat Galim*,[1] he had spoken to representatives of the United States, France and Britain at the Security Council as well as to Borberg, the Danish

representative. Comay had spoken to Munro from New Zealand. He had found complete understanding by the French representative who had promised to ensure that the issue was placed on the agenda, that Eban and Azmi would address the Council, and that the debate would then be postponed to a date to be determined by the president, but not before the conclusion of deliberations in the Armistice Commission. He requested that Eban's address be short and not too extreme. The American, Barco, was more reticent, but agreed in principle. The British representative, Crosthwaite, complained at the Israeli initiative which could endanger the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement, and had little expectation from the debate. He would not make any commitment regarding procedure. Borberg and the Security Council secretariat recognized Israel's right to address the Council but were apprehensive of procedural manoeuvres by the Lebanese. Munro also supported the Israeli claim in general, but would need to consult.

In Kidron's opinion, Israel has passed over the procedural stumbling-block, but the difficulties would begin when Israel endeavoured to convene the Council a second time after the conclusion of deliberations in the Armistice Commission, if the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement had not been signed by then.[2]

Notes

1. In a previous telegram, Kidron had expressed the fear that in the debate which would open on 14 October in the Security Council on the *Bat Galim* issue, the Arabs would adopt a procedural tactic, which would prevent Eban from making his statement. Lebanon, a member of the Council, had opposed including the item on the agenda on the grounds that the Council must not encroach on the Israel-Egypt Armistice Commission which was dealing with the affair. Sharett replied that the members of the Security Council must be persuaded that the Armistice Commission was occupied by the Egyptian complaint on the alleged firing and not by the issue of the freedom of passage in the Canal, which belonged exclusively to the Security Council's area of jurisdiction, and about which Israel had lodged a complaint to the Council. (See Kidron's telegram to the M.F.A., X205, 9 October 1954; Sharett to the Israel mission to the U.N., Y507, 11 October 1954, both filed under 130.02/2452/4.)
2. On the debate in the Council on 14 October see No. 412 (Editorial Note).

410. R. Shiloah (Washington) to J. Herzog. 12 October 1954

Coded Tel. WIA971; Outg.: 93.01/2210/20

Summary

Shiloah reports on his meeting with Bedell-Smith. He told him about his conversation with Dulles and how he had been disappointed with him, especially as in previous meetings he had made more satisfying commitments.[1] Smith said that he was surprised and that things had worked out differently from what he had expected before he left his position. He added that perhaps the military survey that had been carried out in the Department of State, the lack of progress in the provision of military aid to Egypt, and the internal decision in the Department that if military aid was supplied to Egypt it would be very modest, and especially the argument of the Near East Section in the Department that a pronounced pro-Israel statement would sabotage better Arab-West relations – all these were the cause of the change in the secretary's attitude. If Bedell-Smith were still in office, it is possible that he would have been able to provide the secretary with support, even though he too was convinced that Israel is stronger militarily than its enemies, and that the problem is mainly political. Shiloah replied that it is true that Israel is strong militarily, but the extent of the aid the Arabs were receiving and the political preferential treatment given them could lead to the creation of an illusion among Arab leaders that they were being given a free hand. Smith undertook to see whether it would be possible for him to intervene. In any event, he was planning to visit Israel. The secretary supported the idea and the visit would be an expression of friendship.

Shiloah reports on the vigorous public activities that had begun in the United States. Jewish Republicans had expressed protest and declared that they would not support the election campaign. Fourteen heads of Jewish organizations has requested a meeting with the secretary of state and stated that they would publish a joint statement.[3] As a result of determined efforts, Stevenson, the Democratic candidate, had also agreed to include a supportive section in his address.[5]

Notes

1. See No. 402 and notes.
2. In the elections which were due to be held in November, Ives was the Republican candidate for the post of governor of the State of New York against Harriman, the Democratic candidate, and Javitz was the Republican candidate for the post of

attorney-general of the State of New York. (In the election for the post of governor Harriman was elected, and Javitz was elected to the post of attorney-general.)

3. See No. 432.
4. See No. 427.

411. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the United States Division. 12 October 1954

Coded Tel. WIA972; Outg.: 93.01/2210/21

Summary

Reports on his meeting with Byroade.[1] Shiloah had decided prior to the meeting that he would not enter into negotiations with him on the secretary of state's statement, but would use the opportunity to vigorously attack United States policy. In doing so, he referred especially to the blockade of the Suez Canal, stating that if it were not for the hesitations of the Americans, this problem could have been solved.

Byroade, who had not been briefed sufficiently, defended American policy, claiming that it was inevitable in the circumstances. Israel is making a mistake by stressing the military problem, when in fact part of the military equipment in Nasser's possession was useless because of the lack of trained pilots and mechanics. He claimed that the West now had the opportunity to improve its position in the Middle East, and this would also be to Israel's advantage. He mentioned Nasser's internal difficulties. He agreed that Israel was justified in its claims concerning freedom of navigation, but Israel lacked patience and had chosen a moment to test this principle that was not opportune. He affirmed that during his visit to Egypt he would make concerted efforts to find a solution, but asked that Israel not make matters more difficult for him by establishing facts at unsuitable times.

Notes

1. See No. 402.
2. This apparently refers to the publication of the Egyptian version of the circumstances surrounding the detention of the *Bat Galim* (see No. 390 and n. 1) or to Rafael's' broadcast in Arabic (see No. 396, n. 2).
3. See No. 387.
4. See No. 198, n. 1.
5. No. 406.

412. Editorial Note

Debate in the Security Council on the Egyptian Restrictions on the Freedom of Navigation in the Suez Canal and on the Detention of the Bat Galim Vessel.

On 14 October the debate opened in the Security Council on Israel's complaint against Egypt on restrictions on the passage of vessels trading with Israel through the Suez Canal, concerning the detention of the Bat Galim ship. The Lebanese representative, who had been given permission to speak before the representatives of Israel and Egypt were invited to the Council table, suggested, in an informal manner, to postpone the debate until after the report on the results of the investigation of the Armistice Commission into this matter had been received. The representatives of China and Columbia supported his proposal, but since no other member of the Council's asked to express an opinion on it, the representatives of Israel and Egypt were called to speak.

Eban reviewed the Egyptian violations of free navigation in the Canal and the Security Council's treatment of the subject, and recalled in this connection the Council's resolution of September 1951 regarding the right of free passage in the Canal and the debate in February-March 1954 which had ended without a resolution because of the Soviet veto. He pointed out that, despite the resolution of 1951 and the majority favouring its renewed approval in March 1954, not only did Egypt not rescind the restrictions, but it even intensified them, and the boycott had since then become an accepted international fact. He demanded that the Council discuss both the general issue of the boycott and also the case of the *Bat Galim,* that it express its opinion on the restrictions on shipping in general, condemn the seizure of the ship and give instructions for its immediate release with its crew so that it would be able to continue on its way to Haifa.

Azmi, the Egyptian representative, repeated the Egyptian version of the events in the *Bat Galim* incident, and noted that since his statement in the Security Council, at the end of the debate at the end of March, that now Egypt, of its own free will, would.henceforth display patience, in fact Egypt had refrained from any interference with ships carrying cargoes to Israel and from it, and had allowed them to go through the Canal. He suggested waiting for the results of the investigation of the U.N. Observers and for the end of the Armistice Commission's treatment of the matter. Other members of the Council joined a similar proposal, presented by the Brazilian representative, and it was decided, without a vote being taken, to postpone the debate until the report was received. (See *SCOR, 9th Year,* 682nd Meeting, 14 October 1954). See also No. 448 (Editorial Note).

413. R. Shiloah (Washington) to J. Herzog. 14 October 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2455/2

Summary

Shiloah sends his appraisal of relations between Israel and the United States. In his opinion, Israel is entering a period of continuous conflict over changes and adjustments of U.S. policy in the Middle East. In his estimation, the outcome will not be dependent on the results of the American elections. Unfortunately, he does not see any substantial difference between the attitude of the Republicans or the Democrats in this area. Both parties pay careful attention to the Department of State's Middle East Department, and Israeli efforts to get the spokesmen of the opposition party to express support had been hardly more successful than with the governing party.

The impression is that the Administration does want to re-assure Israel, but this desire will not result in a serious response to its demands. The Administration puts forward a threefold argument: 1. Israel has no basis for apprehension and much time will pass until the Arab states will reach a level of strength that would constitute a threat to Israel. 2. The United States policy of closer relations with the Arabs has begun to show success and any deviation from this line could endanger achievements reached thus far. 3. If the Arabs despaired of the United States and came to the conclusion that this government as well had succumbed to Israeli pressure, any hope of stability in the Middle East would be lost, Nasser would fall, Iraq would not join the Turkey-Pakistan pact and the region would revert to chaos.

In the course of the campaign Israel had mounted during the past months, he had become aware of the potential latent within American Jewry but it was also clear that the will and strength available of this community had not been exploited to the fullest extent. In the light of this, he requests immediate substantial personnel reinforcement in public relations persons and Israeli consular offices in the United States.

Notes

1. The reference apparently is to a speech made by President Eisenhower on 20 October at a reception held by the American Jewish Committee marking the occasion of the 300th anniversary of Jewish settlement in America – see No. 427, note 3.
2. No. 403.
3. See No. 406, n. 2.

414. Rav Aluf M. Dayan [Tel Aviv] to Major-General E.L.M. Burns (Jerusalem). 17 October 1954

Notes

1. General Burns and the Chief of Staff Dayan met on 16 October, at Dayan's initiative, after the previous day the Israeli representative had refrained from signing the document of "the arrangement of the local commanders in Jerusalem and its environs", even though this was the wording that Israel had proposed and which Jordan had agreed to (see No. 352, n. 2), because Burns had appended to the document his signature as witness.

   At the meeting, Dayan explained to Burns that the principle by which Israel was acting in the Armistice Commissions was based on direct contact between the parties, and it was not a question of a contract which required witnesses to its signature, but on the contrary, the intention was to place the responsibility on the parties. (See Shalev's report on the meeting with Burns, 17 October 1954, 130.16/2948/17.)
2. In the Jordanian proposal which Burns conveyed to Israel on 28 October, the signature procedure was in accordance with Dayan's suggestion in the present document; at the same time it contained two basic amendments: the reduction of the area covered by the arrangement, which left Mount Scopus outside it, and giving the parties the right to request the presence of a U.N. representative at the commanders' meetings, or to inform him of incidents or of the measures being taken to prevent them. (See the arrangement of the commanders in Jerusalem and its environs (Jordanian proposal) and Shalev's report, 2 November 1954, on the meeting with Burns on 28 October 1954, 130.16/2948/17). For the continuation of the affair see No. 445 and No. 504.

415. Meeting: A. Lourie – A. Moore (Tel Aviv, 17 October 1954)

Notes

1. According to the British report on this meeting, it took place in Tel Aviv, in Moore's private residence. (See Moore to Falla, 18 October 1954, PRO, FO371/11106.)
2. In a conversation held on 4 October, Eytan and Lourie pointed to the restraint that Israel had been exercising for the past month in spite of a rising series of murders on the Jordanian and Egyptian border, and they took a very grave view of the case of the stolen Ein Hashofet herd (see No. 408, n. 10) which had not been returned by then. (See telegram from the British Commonwealth Division to the Israel embassy in London, No. 371, 4 October 1954, 130.09/2320/1.)
3. The announcement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesman made on 5 October, following a discussion in the government on 3 October, stated that "in the past few weeks the Israeli residents working and guarding in the areas bordering on

the Gaza Strip and the Kingdom of Jordan have exercised great restraint in view of the repeated acts of murder and aggression perpetrated by their neighbours from across the border line." The spokesman enumerated a long list of incidents that had occurred during this period, and mentioned various efforts by Israel to ease the tension, which had not elicited any reaction except in the form of additional violence. And he concluded that "from all of these acts combined there emerges a gloomy and horrifying picture of violence, sabotage and murder. The anger of the residents along the border, and their wish to defend themselves demand that an end be put one way or another to the constant menace to their lives and property."

4. Avner expressed his feeling in a conversation with Brewis in the British Foreign Office on 6 October, in reply to a statement by the latter that the situation on the borders of Israel appeared quite tranquil. In reply to Avner's comment, Brewis expressed the hope that Israel would not resort to reprisal operations. (See Brewis's report, 7 October 1954, PRO, FO371/11106.)
5. In talks in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 29 and 30 September, Bendor pointed to the deterioration of the situation on the Egyptian border, as if from a malicious Egyptian intention to aggravate relations, and gave a list of the incidents during August-September in support of his claim. (See Bendor's report on the conversation, 1 October 1954, 130.02/23832/12.)
6. See No. 414 and notes.

416. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Moscow. 17 October 1954

Coded Tel. 130.09/2326/1

Summary

Eytan reports on his meeting with the Soviet chargé d'affaires, Fomin, concerning Israel's refusal to provide visas for the Soviet delegation to the Israel-Soviet Union Friendship League Congress organized by the Communist party in Israel.[1] Fomin requested clarification. Eytan replied that explanation had been given in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' statement published in the press that morning.[2] He added that the Israel government feared that the visit of the delegation would be exploited for internal purposes and would not contribute to friendly relations between the two countries. Fomin replied that the purpose of the visit was the improvement of cultural relations between the two countries, and the refusal would be construed by Soviet public opinion as an impediment to the development of these ties.[3]

Notes

1. This refers to the 6-member VOKS delegation, the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, which had been invited to the Israel-Soviet Union Friendship Congress, which was organized in Israel by the Israel Communist Party and the Sneh splinter group. The Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs contacted the Israel embassy in Moscow requesting that entry permits to Israel be granted, but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs refused to give permits to the delegation, with the exception of one of its members, who possessed a diplomatic passport, on the grounds that visits of a public nature between Israel and the Soviet Union had to be conducted on the basis of reciprocity and in the government's name. Following this decision the bearer of the permit also cancelled his visit. (See exchanges of telegrams, from the Israel embassy in Moscow, Nos. 155, 161, 10, 18 October 1954, 130.09/2326/2; from the East European Division, Nos. 108, 111, 11 October 1954, 130.09/2326/1.)
2. The announcement stated that the Government of Israel always approved of reciprocal visits by public personalities from both countries in order to enhance the friendly relations between them; and that following the announcement of the Soviet ambassador in Israel of his government's desire to foster cultural relations between the two countries, the Israeli ambassador in Moscow presented on May 1954 a detailed plan for reciprocal visits of performers and scientists (see No. 327 and notes there), but in spite of his repeated appeals, the last one of which was in September, he had not received an answer to his proposals. In the meantime Israel had responded positively and granted permits to the delegation which was sent to the convention of the "Democratic Women" which operated under the aegis of the Communist Party and the Sneh faction, but during its stay in Israel this delegation had avoided contacts with the women's organizations occupying a central position in Israeli life with the result that the delegation received a distorted picture of the situation prevailing in Israel. Consequently, Israel stood by the principle of reciprocity and requested that, just as Israeli guests in the Soviet Union enjoy official government guidance, so Soviet guests in Israel will be invited by the government, institution or organization with a recognized public status, and in any case it was not feasible that they would boycott these bodies. (Text of the announcement in File 130.02/2390/20.)
3. Subsequently several attempts were made to find a compromise formula, the essence of which was combining the participation of the delegation in the Congress together with visits to institutions in Israel according to the direction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (see the East European Division to the Israel embassy in Moscow, 21 October 1954, 130.09/2326/1), but these suggestions were rejected by the Soviets - see No. 438.

417. A. Eban (Washington) to G. Rafael. 18 October 1954

Notes

1. See No. 412 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 404 and n. 1.
3. See also Kidron's telegram from New York which noted that Azmi's speech had indeed impressed the delegations by its moderation and created the impression that the blockade in the Suez Canal had been lifted de facto, if not de jure, and suggested that the next trial ship should be an oil tanker, and not necessarily an Israeli one. (See telegram No. 232, dated 18 October 1954, 130.09/2331/13.)

418. Editorial Note

Arrest of the Members of the Secret Israeli Network in Egypt and the Intervention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Prevent Harsh Sentences in the Trial

In 1951 the Intelligence branch of the I.D.F. set up a secret network in Egypt, which comprised two sections, one in Cairo and the second in Alexandria, of young Egyptian Jews, members of the Zionist youth movements. The network, which had been dormant, was activated in July 1954, against the background of the distress and political isolation in which Israel found itself at that time, in particular in light of the forthcoming signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement, backed by the United States, which was designed to evacuate the British base in the Suez Canal region and to transfer control of the Canal to Egypt. The decision to activate the network was taken in the belief that sabotaging British and American interests in Egypt would lead to the thwarting or the delaying of the British measure. On 2 July, incendiary bombs were dropped into post boxes in Alexandria, and on 14 July incendiary bombs were placed in the American libraries in Cairo and Alexandria. The damage caused by these acts was negligible. The main action was scheduled for 23 July, the Day of the Revolution in Egypt, when the members of the network were going to place incendiary bombs in cinemas in Cairo and Alexandria. However, the operation failed when one of the bombs ignited in the pocket of one of the network members, who was arrested and following which all the network members were arrested. The network operator, an Israeli intelligence officer, managed to get out of Egypt.

The affair of the secret Israeli network in Egypt, its operation and its failure, (what is known as the "The Affair"), and the political and personal debate that erupted in Israel after the failure in Egypt, a debate that revolved mainly around the question of who had given the instruction to activate the network, Minister of Defence Lavon or the head of the Intelligence branch Binyamin Givli (the Chief of Staff Dayan was at the time on a visit in the United States), is one of the gravest and most difficult incidents in the history of the State of Israel. From the documentation available to the editors it emerges that those responsible for the external relations of the State, in particular Moshe Sharett, both as prime minister and as foreign minister, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself, were unaware of the existence of the network.

The first reports of the arrest of the network members were published in Egypt and the Arab states, and from there also in Israel, on 26 July. The first reference to this event in Moshe Sharett's diary is on July 27: "Were caught in Egypt" and on July 29 – the gist of a conversation with Golda Meyerson, following which Sharett summoned Isser Harel, and after that Givli joined them and "told about Egypt". The Ministry of Foreign Affairs acted only after Radio Cairo announced on 12 October the issuing of the charge sheet against the members of the network, in which the prosecutor-general called for the death penalty for the 13 accused. According to his diary, Sharett met with Gideon Rafael on 15 October to discuss the affair, and since then, and during the trial which opened on 11 December in Cairo, the Ministry acted to thwart the death sentence on the accused. (See M. Sharett, *Political Diary*, Vol. II, pp. 562, 586 [Hebrew]; Black and Morris, *Israel's Secret War*, pp. 107-116.)

419. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 18 October 1954

Coded Tel. 951; Outg.: 130.09/2310/8

Summary

Eytan instructs Eban to mobilize Blaustein and other Jewish leaders to take action against the trials of the prisoners in Egypt.[1] They should demonstrate their apprehension and demand that the United States government use its influence with Egypt not to overshadow the achievement of the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement by imposing death sentences. A similar telegram was sent to London.[2]

Notes

1. See Editorial Note above.
2. Elath was asked, according to a similar directive, to recruit the Board of Deputies and prominent Jewish personalities. (See telegram to the embassy in London, No. 441, 18 October 1954, 130.09/2320/1.) On the mobilization of Blaustein see No. 433 and n. 2. Additional instructions for saving the 13 accused see Nos. 434, 435.

420. A. Eban (Washington) to J. Herzog. 19 October 1954

Notes

1. On activating Arthur Dean, Dewey and other prominent personalities in the ranks of the Republicans – see No. 429.
2. Blaustein talked with Byroade on 15 October. Byroade said that he knew that Israel was disappointed, because it had reason to expect more than was offered, but it emerged that in his initial conversations with Eban (see Nos. 313 and 321) Dulles had not taken into account all the complications involved in complying with Israel's demand, which was in fact a demand for a fundamental change in the United States policy. Now, both he and Dulles believed that they should not make any announcement to Israel before the elections, for fear that such an announcement would be interpreted as a decision dictated by election considerations; and moreover, because of the fact what they could say to Israel would not satisfy it. Therefore, their intention was to make an announcement, in the form of a reply to a non-Jewish American personality, which would include amendments to the text which Dulles had read out to Eban and Shiloah in their last conversation. (See No. 402.)

   Essentially, in the new wording it was stated indirectly that they would make sure that the arms that were supplied would not upset the balance of power and they would not be used for attacking, and if they were used for aggression, aid would be stopped and steps would be taken to repel it. With regard to security arrangements in the region, Byroade maintained that officially the Americans had not formed any organization in the region and therefore they were not authorized to invite Israel to participate. Blaustein replied saying that this was an evasion, and the United States could use its influence to include Israel in these security arrangements.

   In Blaustein's view, the new version was better than the previous one, although still not satisfactory. The text of the announcement was general, but it contained some practical footholds. He himself had suggested many additional corrections, and in his estimation, the announcement could serve as the basis for intensifying the political momentum. (See personal message by courier from Shiloah to Herzog, [21?] October 1954, 130.19/4374/8.)
3. The reference is to remarks made by Sobeloff, the solicitor-general in the United States administration, to Shiloah on 12 October, concerning an internal consultation in Dulles's office, in which he himself had also taken part. Hall, the chairman of the Republican Party, described to those present the public's anxiety and apprehension

over the Administration's Middle East policy, and he stated that the Administration intended to dispel this anxiety by means of a letter signed by the secretary of state to be sent to one of the senators standing for election, and which would be published in the press. Rabb, the President's adviser, spoke of the great anxiety among many American Jews, not only the Zionists. Byroade outlined the background to the American policy, and noted the large amounts of economic aid that the United States was extending to Israel, enabling it also to fortify itself militarily, and at the end he read the suggested wording of the letter. The letter repeated the text that Dulles had read from the paper to Eban and Shiloah (see No. 402) with several amendments, including greater emphasis on friendly relations with Israel, avoiding the upsetting of the balance of power, and a declaration in support of the freedom of navigation. Sobeloff was asked if this wording would placate Israel's friends. He replied that in his opinion there was no value to this wording, and suggested consulting with Eban or with "objective American Jews, devoted to the Administration and also concerned about the fate of Israel", such as Proskauer. Byroade replied that they had in fact received a letter from Proskauer (see No. 407, n. 2), and that in the suggested wording of the letter there was compliance with most of the points raised in his letter. It was agreed that Sobeloff would study the letter and suggest alterations or new wording. That same night the embassy staff drafted suggestions and corrections that Sobeloff would present in his name, and it was agreed that he would recommend that they consult with Proskauer, Blaustein, Klutznik and Silver. (See Shiloah to J. Herzog, WIA973, 13 October 1954, 130.09/2310/12; for the suggested wording of the letter see appendix to Shiloah's letter to Herzog, 21 October 1954, 130.19/4374/5.)

4. Further developments in this matter, see No. 427.
5. The last part of the sentence, beginning with the word "meanwhile" is not in the outgoing version, and is only found in the incoming version of the telegram (in File 130.09/2310/12.) It is not inconceivable that it was added after Eisenhower's speech. (See No. 427 and n. 3.)
6. In the campaign organized by the American Zionist Committee For Public Affairs, by the end of October 315 candidates for the Congress elections had signed a circular which included preconditions for sending arms shipments to the Arab states, among them that they would declare their agreement to enter into peace negotiations with Israel and would lift the siege and blockade against it. (See Dinitz's survey of the elections, 29 November 1954, 43.03/7226/4.)
7. On the two meetings that took place on 25 October in New York, see No. 432. In reply, the United States Division cabled "initial thoughts" about the document presented here. It would appear that Dulles's remarks on 7 August (No. 321) had been an outburst of goodwill from which he had retreated under pressure of the officials, but since after the elections he would be able to give Israel a hard time, it was best not to attack him personally; from his letter to Eban (No. 403, n. 4) it was clear that he would not invite Eban for another talk until after the elections. Therefore it was advisable, for the sake of continuity and as protection against the accusation of interference in the United States elections, to reply to the secretary of state in writing, pointing out that it was he who had made suggestions two and a half months previously so that they should be conveyed to the Israeli government, and had also promised to deal personally and immediately with the matter. Since then the situation had grown more serious with the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement and the approaching implementation of the arming of Iraq, whereas the

Israeli government waited in vain for a reply. The Division asked Eban to give his opinion about these suggestions. (See the United States Division to the Israel embassy in Washington, Telegram 953, 21 October 1954, 130.09/2310/8.) See also No. 429.

The question of whether or not to reply to Dulles in writing served as a subject of discussion and an exchange of drafts between Sharett and Eban. Sharett was not eager to reply, but Eban insisted on giving a reply. (See telegrams from Sharett to Eban, IW969, IW970, 24-25 October 1954, 130.09/2310/8; Eban's telegram to Sharett, X250, 26 October 1954, 130.09/2331/13.). The reply which was finally sent – see No. 443.

421. E. Elath (London) to A. Lourie. 19 October 1954

Coded Tel. 73; Outg.: 93.04/40/17

Summary

Elath reports on a meeting with Shuckburgh to discuss two matters:

1. Sharett's reply to Eden's request to make a gesture.[1] He handed him Sharett's reply and explained it in detail – a free area in the Haifa Port in exchange for the resumption of trade ties between the two states. Shuckburgh said that this was an excellent proposal but he doubted whether Jordan would accept it because of the objection of the other Arab states. He also stated that they appreciated the moderate line taken by Israel recently and this was given expression in Eden's letter to Elath.[3]

2. Elath raised Israel's request to the Ministry of Supply regarding the purchase of twenty Centurion tanks and fifty 25-pound artillery pieces. Shuckburgh replied that he was not aware of the request for artillery, but as for the Centurions, Israel would receive a reply that would not disappoint them. Elath presumes that Israel would receive part of the request for Centurions.

Notes

1. In this telegram Sharett acceded to Elath's request (see No. 408, n. 11) "Very well, you can announce in the reply to the Note that we suggest demanding that Jordan renew trade relations with Israel, whereas we shall then open Haifa Port to them, by means of a free zone arrangement in the port for their import and export, with unhindered transit of goods under our supervision from the border to Haifa and vice versa." (See telegram from Sharett to Elath, No. 437, 18 October 1954, 130.09/2320/1.)
2. No. 408.
3. No. 424.

422. Editorial Note

The Signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement for the Evacuation of the British Base in the Suez Canal Region.

On 19 October, the final draft of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement for the evacuation of the British forces from the base in the region of the Suez Canal, and the arrangements for its future maintenance, was signed. According to the Agreement, upon its signing the 1936 treaty between Britain and Egypt (which was due to expire in 1956) was no longer valid; the British forces would be evacuated from Egyptian soil in stages, the final evacuation to be completed in June 1956; but in the event of an attack on Egypt by a state from outside the region, on the Arab states signatories to the collective security treaty of the Arab League, or on Turkey, Egypt would allow Britain to deploy on the military base in the Suez area and to operate it once again. Paragraph 8 of the Agreement stated that the two signatory states recognized that the Suez Canal, which was an inseparable part of Egypt, was a waterway of international importance, and they were determined to uphold the Constantinople Convention of 1888 regarding the freedom of passage in the Canal.

(The full text of the Agreement see in Reports to the Israel Missions Abroad, 24 October 1954, 130.13/2559/5.)

423. E. Elath (London) to M. Sharett. 19 October 1954

Coded Tel. 72; Outg.: 93.04/40/17

Summary

Elath reports on his visit to Shuckburgh during which he received the unsigned version of Eden's letter to him[1] concerning the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement. After Elath had perused the contents, Shuckburgh asked him for his reaction. Elath replied that the letter needed to be examined carefully. At first glance, there was nothing new in the clauses dealing with the arrangements with Egypt, and Israel's reservations about them, that would reduce Israel's apprehensions. He asked whether the renewed reference to the Three Power Declaration alluded to the fact that in case of attack on Israel, British forces stationed in the area would be sent to put down the aggression. Shuckburgh replied that the formulation did not commit them to anything new except the obligations arising from the Three

Power Declaration and the United Nations Charter. Elath expressed his disappointment at this explanation and asked how could Israel rely on this Declaration as the basis for its security when Jordan and Iraq have military pacts with Britain and the Arab countries are secured by military pacts with each other. Shuckburgh was somewhat perplexed as apparently he had expected a more enthusiastic response, and expressed his opinion that after a detailed examination Elath would find more positive aspects in the letter.

Notes

1. No. 424.
2. See No. 421 and n. 1.
3. No. 376.
4. See No. 383.
5. No. 375.

424. A. Eden (London) to E. Elath (London). 19 October 1954

Notes

1. On the circumstances of the delivery of this letter see No. 423.
2. See No. 375.
3. See No. 295. n. 1.
4. See No. 285.
5. See No. 408, and n. 7.
6. See No. 386 (Editorial Note).
7. Elath's comments on Eden's letter – see No. 426.

425. M. Gazit [London] to the Israel Ambassador in London. 19 October 1954

Copy: 130.02/2457/2

Summary

Gazit reacts to Eden's letter to Elath.[1] In his opinion, it would be better for Israel to oppose publication of the letter. The aim of the letter was to fulfil his obligations to Israel and to "clear the desk" prior to submitting the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement to parliament. The letter had been formulated deliberately in a manner suited for publication and its aim was to serve as a

public reply to Israel's contentions. On the other hand, Israel could benefit by agreeing to the publication of the letter, since this would improve its relations with Britain and its image among the British and Israeli public. The letter also contains an admission of Israel's contribution to the improvement of its relations with the Arabs. However, in the final analysis, the harm caused by publication outweighs the benefits. If Israel could succeed in persuading the British to make a statement on their own initiative, without reference to the letter, in the spirit of its contents, Israel could achieve the main aim that would be attained by its publication.[4]

Notes

1. No. 424.
2. Nos. 375, 376.
3. See No. 408 and n. 7; No. 386 (Editorial Note).
4. This letter was made public in London on 20 October 1954.

426. E. Elath (London) to M. Sharett (Jerusalem). 20 October 1954

Coded Tel. 74; Outg.: 93.04/40/17

Summary

Elath sends some comments on Eden's letter,[1] relating to the timing of its publication and some of the points therein. His conclusion is that he considers the letter as a most important political event both because of its demonstrative value and as an official and public basis for the evaluation of Israel's relations with Britain, and their definition as friendly. Now, on the basis of this letter, Israel will have to demand that Eden and his government promptly carry out practical steps in the spirit of the letter and its contents. At the same time, he warns against illusions about the possibility of attaining a balance in Britain's relations towards Israel and towards the Arab countries, because of its vital interests in the latter states. However, Eden's letter does not bar the way for Israel to continue to put forward to Britain its justified demands and at the same time it even increases the prospects of improved relations.

Notes

1. No. 424.
2. Nos. 376 and 383.
3. See No. 423.
4. See No. 285.
5. The matter arose in Sharett's conversation with Ambassador Nicholls – No. 454 and n. 1.
6. Simultaneously, Sharett also cabled his assessment of the letter: the letter was written in a friendly spirit and intended to make a friendly impression, but there was not much substance in it, and in any case it totally ignored the question that Israel had presented in its Note. Sharett had found the paragraph on navigation in the Canal inappropriate since the explanation of Egypt's stand implied defence of its cause. (See Sharett's telegram to Elath, No. 447, 21 October 1954, 130.09/2320/1.)

427. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 20 October 1954

Coded Tel XA234; Outg.: 93.01/2210/20

Summary

Eban presents a description of recent developments.[1] On Monday [18 October] a consultation was held of officials of the Department of State, the Republican party and the White House. The secretary of state participated and there are rumours that even the president was there. It appears that pressure on the White House and the Department of State was very heavy. The speeches of Stevenson and Harriman also worried them.[2] They were particularly disturbed by the daily appeals from all sectors of American Jewry. Representatives of the Department of State and of the president expressed their annoyance with Israel because in their view this campaign was instigated by the embassy.

Since they do not expect Israel to express satisfaction at any formulation, it was decided to delay the declaration until after the elections, although there is a possibility that it would be published beforehand. This information was given to Blaustein and he was also told that they are continuing to work on the declaration, and some of the proposed amendments had been accepted. Information to this effect had been passed on to Arthur Dean.

Notes

1. See No. 420 and notes.
2. In a speech he delivered in New York on 17 October, prior to the Congress elections, the Democratic candidate for the presidency of the United States, Adlai Stevensón, referred to the Israel-Arab crisis. He noted that in contrast to Britain and Egypt who had recently normalized their relations, after seven years peace had still not been established between Israel and the Arabs. He mentioned Israel's concern about the U.S. government's plan to equip its Arab neighbours with arms, and expressed the hope that the important peace proposals lately put forward by Israel were liable at the very least to point the way to direct talks with the Arabs. (See *Ha'aretz,* 18 October 1954.)

   Averell Harriman, the Democratic candidate for the post of Governor of the State of New York, made a speech at the reception held in New York on 19 October on behalf of the Bonds campaign. He voiced criticism of Dulles's Middle East policy and said that supplying American arms to the Arab states alone was only likely to serve the interests of communism. What the Middle East needed he said was water pipes and not arms. It would be best for the United States to exert its full influence to ensure the peaceful settlement of the disputes between the rival parties. (*Ha'aretz,* 20 October 1954.)
3. In a speech he made in New York on 20 October, at a reception by the American Jewish Committee on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of Jewish settlement in America, President Eisenhower also referred to the subject of the Middle East and said: "We note with regret the fact that a solution still has not been found to the main differences of opinion between Israel and the Arab states. We shall continue to work for the establishment of peaceful relations between these nations by firm friendship for Israel and the other nations. I promise you that as we assist in enhancing the security of the entire Middle East we shall take care to ensure that any weapons we supply will be devoted solely for this purpose and not to bring about local imbalances which could be exploited to intimidate a neighbouring state or to attack it. Every agreement of this nature between us and any state includes sufficient guarantees to prevent such a perversion of the goal." (See *Ha'aretz,* 22 October 1954.)
4. See No. 432.

428. E. Elath (London) to W. Eytan. 21 October 1954

Coded Tel. 77; Inc.: 130.09/2320/2

Summary

Elath reports on a meeting he had with the Emperor of Ethiopia. This was a private meeting held after participating in an official reception in honour of the Emperor at the Ethiopian Embassy. The Emperor expressed his regret that he had not yet officially recognized Israel, despite the esteem and

sympathy both he and his people accorded Israel. He stated that recognition was a matter of "the shortest time." It was his desire that the two countries should exchange representatives in order to strengthen ties in the economic and commercial spheres.[1] He did not object to the immigration to Israel of the Falashas, and hoped that Israel would receive them cordially in their new homeland. He said that he and his wife intended to visit Jerusalem in a few months time, but did not state whether this visit was to Old or New Jerusalem. Elath suggested that details of the program of the visit be worked out with the Ethiopian ambassador in London, and on the basis of the Emperor's statement, an invitation to visit Israel should be extended. The Emperor will be in London for a few days and if Elath receives a quick reply, he could deal with the matter while the Emperor is still there.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 235 and n. 2.
2. After receiving the Ministry's consent, Elath contacted the Ethiopian ambassador and invited the Emperor in the name of the president and the government to visit Israel. However, he added that the unclear status of the relations between the two states made it advisable to straighten out in advance problems that were almost certainly liable to arise. The Ethiopian ambassador confirmed that the Emperor and his wife wished to visit the Israeli part of Jerusalem, after their visit to the Old City, and expressed the hope that the visit would present the opportunity to establish full diplomatic relations between the two countries. He proceeded to speak of the personal warmth which the Emperor felt towards Israel and the great benefit he saw in strengthening relations with it in order to enhance the standing of the non-Moslem nations in the region. (See Eytan's telegram to the Israel embassy in London, No. 455, 22 October 1954, 130.09/2320/1; Elath to Eytan, No. 143, 5 November 1954, 130.09/2320/2.)

429. United States Division (Jerusalem) to A. Eban and R. Shiloah (Washington). 22 October 1954

Coded Tel. IWA956; Outg.: 130.09/2310/8

Summary

The United States Division sends ideas further to those contained in its previous telegram[1] concerning the public campaign in the United States.

Planning for activities to be carried out after the elections should begin now so as to counteract the Department of State's reasoning that the way will be open for easy implementation of its policy after the elections. Rallies

should be organized for the week after the elections with the participation of elected representatives from both parties. Consideration should be given to the establishment of an effective leadership of American Jewry that will keep a watch on matters concerning Israel in normal times and not only in times of crisis. Church circles should be activated. Candidates for positions in the Administration should also be invited to the rally in the following week to maintain equality and to prevent false allegations after the elections. At the meeting of the presidents of Jewish organizations with the secretary of state,[5] the presidents should stress their concern as Americans at the abandonment of Israel as compared with the actions of the secretary in other matters, such as: restrictions on the arming of Germany by the imposition of specific obligations; the offer of aid to India at the same time as the agreement with Pakistan; delay of aid to Egypt until the accord with Britain has been completed, etc.

The Division presumes that the leaking of the secretary's approach to Eden on the matter of free navigation through the Canal[6] was intended to divert attention from the main issue.[8]

Notes

1. No. 420, n. 7.
2. B.J. Sheil, the Catholic Church's representative in Chicago.
3. This presumably refers to the French ambassador in Israel, Pierre Gilbert.
4. The reference is to David Hacohen's meeting with Russell on 23 October, which was designed to mitigate the possible impression in the United States following the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announcement which had expressed reservation about the vote of the Israeli delegation regarding the seating of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations – see Nos. 378, 385. (See telegram of the United States Division, TNWA551, 23 September 1954, 130.09/2312/8.)
5. See No. 432.
6. This refers to a report by the U.P. news agency quoting a source in the American delegation to the Paris Conference (the conference was held on 20-23 October with participation of the foreign ministers of the Western states headed by the United States, Britain, France), according to whom Dulles had contacted Eden on 21 October and requested him to exercise his good offices to bring to an end the Egyptian interference with the freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal. In this connection Herzog reminded Sharett of their fear that with the approach of the elections Dulles would try to make use of the announcement on the freedom of navigation in order to evade the main issue, and he suggested instructing Eban to warn the delegation of Presidents of Jewish Organizations, that was about to meet with the secretary of state, not to fall into this trap. (See Herzog's memorandum to the M.F.A., 22 October 1954, 130.20/2480/5.)
7. See No. 427, n. 3.
8. Eban's reply – see No. 430.

430. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 22 October 1954

Coded Tel. WIA4; Outg.: 93.01/2210/21

Summary

Eban refers to the statement of Vice President Nixon quoting Dulles[1] and states that it corresponds to a specific clause in the statement about to be published. This shows that the lack of equality between the arming of the Arabs and Israel has begun to seep into public consciousness, and even though the comments of the president[2] and the secretary do not solve the problem, they should not be considered worthless but rather as commitments to be exploited against the one-sided supply of arms.

As for the other proposals,[3] these should be weighed in the light of three developments in the future: the meeting of the presidents of the Jewish organizations with the secretary,[4] the renewal of talks with Dulles, the publication of the statement and reaction to it. Evaluation of the situation should be carried out after each stage.

Notes

1. In a statement on United States policy in the Middle East, which he issued on 21 October, Nixon stated that on that same morning he had received a telegram from Dulles reaffirming the Administration's policy which aimed at the establishment of a just and permanent peace between Israel and the Arab states. He added that Dulles believed that there was a possibility of taking certain steps in this direction, and would act to the best of his ability in order to encourage the efforts aiming at establishing a stable peace in the Middle East. Dulles also believed that it was not sensible to create a situation of local military imbalance which was liable to tempt the extreme elements in some state in the Middle East to initiate aggressive acts against a neighbouring state. Nixon added that it should be noted that the president himself had expressed similar views in a speech he had delivered the previous evening. (*Ha'aretz*, 22 October 1954.)
2. See No. 427, n. 3.
3. See No. 429.
4. See No. 432.
5. This letter was not traced.

431. E. Najar (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 24 October 1954

Copy: 130.02/2411/34

Summary

Najar sends some comments in preparation for the Turkish chargé d'affaires' meeting with the minister of foreign affairs. The chargé announced that the purpose of the visit was to submit a memorandum concerning Cyprus.[1] On a previous occasion an explanation had been given to the chargé that the main factor in Israel's decision on its stand about Cyprus was the Turkish factor. The Turkish chargé was satisfied with this stand but wished to hear it specifically from the minister. Furthermore, the Turks were interested in Israel assisting them to explain their situation in the world press. They also wished to receive further information about Israel's efforts to obtain a loan for them from private banks in the United States.[2,3]

Notes

1. See No. 355 and n. 1.
2. See No. 361.
3. Details of Sharett's conversation with the Turkish representative were not found.

432. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the United States Division. 25 October 1954

Coded Tel. WA15; Outg.: 93.01/2210/21

Summary

Shiloah reports on the secretary of state's meeting with the presidents of Jewish organizations.[1] They submitted a memorandum[2] and stressed that this was the first time for many years that all the Jewish organizations were united in their concern.

The secretary of state replied that he was concerned about dangerous regions in the world, including the Middle East. He was seeking a solution, and recently there have been certain developments that encourage the pursuit of a peaceful solution to the conflict. He stressed that this issue should not become a bone of contention in the United States' election campaign.

At the meeting of the presidents held after this meeting, a sub-committee was elected which would continue to apply pressure after the elections.[3]

Notes

1. According to American records, the representatives of 12 Jewish organizations were present at the meeting (see records in Eisenhower Library, Dulles Papers, subject series, box 10.); memorandum (without title and without date) in the files of the M.F.A. (93.03/116/17) speaks of 14 organizations, whereas the American Jewish Year Book (p. 280) gives the names of 16 organizations.
2. In a memorandum (see n. 1 above) the presidents of the organizations desired to contribute by their comments to a review of United States policy in the Middle East. They warned that the current policy of giving military assistance to the Arab states, when they were openly declaring their commitment to a second round against Israel, and before they had agreed to cooperate in restoring peace to the Middle East, would lead to chaos in the region. They called upon the United States government to demand from Egypt tangible, absolute and unreserved guarantees for freedom of passage in the Suez Canal for all shipping, and not to use the weapons which the British would leave behind them for repression at home and for aggression against their neighbours. They also requested that the United States government should offer to Israel the same agreements as those offered to the Arab states, and invite it to join in the planning of regional defence.
3. On the same day, 25 October, two mass meetings were also held in New York in protest against the policy of arming the Arabs, one of them organized by the Zionist Organizations and the other by the two big labour unions, C.I.O. and A.F.L.

433. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 25 October 1954

Coded Tel. WIA6; Outg.: 93.01/2210/20

Summary

Shiloah reports on Blaustein's meeting with Mahmud Riad. The meeting was held at the initiative of Byroade and with Nasser's knowledge. Byroade had worked for some time to bring about this meeting with the aim of proving to Blaustein and the Jewish leadership that the possibility existed of coming to an arrangement with Egypt and that there were no grounds for Israel's apprehension.

During the course of the meeting, Blaustein demanded that Egypt recognize the existence of Israel and said that if Egypt did not follow a policy of seeking peaceful settlement, the American people and government would not support them. Riad stated that Nasser would be unable to make

any gesture of peace in the near future because of internal as well as external pressures, even though Israel had no cause to fear Egyptian aggression because its concerns were mainly with its internal problems. At the same time, he claimed that Israel was not ready to make concessions and that all the positive proposals coming from the Israelis recently are just repetition of previous statements. The burning issue was that of the refugees, and this would require compensation, more cooperation on the Johnston plan, and, of the utmost importance, relinquishing territory in the Negev on which to settle a quarter of a million refugees. Blaustein reacted emphatically to the latter point by stating that there was no possibility whatsoever of it being accepted. At the end of the meeting, Riad invited Blaustein to visit Cairo to meet with Nasser and others.

Blaustein told Shiloah that he was prepared to go to Cairo, but requested that he receive a thorough briefing. Shiloah believes that during the course of his visit he could be requested to deal with the matter of the prisoners in Egypt, but should not be given the impression that this was the main purpose of his mission, because he would not agree to go for that purpose alone. Shiloah is certain that this is an important opportunity since the initiative for the invitation had come from Nasser. He requests that someone be sent to Paris to brief Blaustein.[2]

Notes

1. No. 419.
2. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was in full agreement with Blaustein's visit to Cairo and was even prepared to send Rafael to Paris in order to brief him. (See Eytan's telegram to Shiloah, IWA979, 26 October 1954, 130.09/2310/8.) Before Blaustein left for Paris on his way to North Africa, Shiloah talked with him and found that he was interested in being armed with ideas, particularly concerning the question of what benefit would accrue to Egypt from a settlement with Israel, including details of plans for economic cooperation, compensation for refugees, and hints about transit via Israel. This was because in his conversation with Riad he had heard that Egypt aspired to be an industrialized nation and was apprehensive about Israeli competition. (See Shiloah to Eytan, WIA24, 28 October 1954, 93.01/2210/20.) On the issue of the trials of the Jews in Egypt, Eban wrote to Blaustein that he attached the utmost importance to efforts to prevent the death penalty since the atmosphere created by this would deal a severe blow to the attempts to bring the two states closer together. (See Eban's telegram to Tsur, for Blaustein, WP171, 27 October 1954.)

434. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassies in Washington, Paris and London. 26 October 1954

Coded Tel. IWA975; Outg.: 130.09/2310/8

Summary

Eytan draws the attention of the three ambassadors to the trials in Egypt.[1] Israel is making a supreme effort to save the 13 accused on trial in Egypt. This matter must be given highest priority by the embassies during the coming weeks. The line to be taken is to condemn Egypt and to force it under public and official pressure to abandon any thought of imposing death sentences or of carrying them out. The 13 accused are apparently in great danger and it would seem that the Egyptians have sufficient evidence against them. Israel can succeed only if the trial is presented as mainly political, which could cause serious deterioration in the atmosphere in the Middle East, and which is based on evidence extracted under pressure. Individual telegrams will be sent to each embassy as a follow up to this one.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 418 (Editorial Note). In a consultation held on 22 October headed by the minister of foreign affairs and with the participation of the senior Ministry officials, the following actions were agreed upon: to issue an announcement (the date of publication was not fixed); to activate Jewish personalities and bodies; to alert public opinion to the persecution of the Jews in Egypt; to deliver a message to Egypt – at a later stage, and not through a governmental body but by Jews; to arrange for a lawyer and to instruct him; and to provide assistance to relatives of the accused in Israel. (See summary of the consultation, 24 October 1954, 130.02/2387/7.)
2. Telegram to London – See No. 435. Eytan wrote to Eban that there was no reason why the United States Government should not forcefully express its opinion against the imposition of the death sentences. He asked if it were possible to the help of the American Council for Judaism or even the support of the Society of Friends of the Middle East. He cabled to Paris that it was very important that someone from the embassy should remain in close touch with Daniel Mayer, who had placed himself unreservedly at the disposal of the campaign, and to try to urgently plan with him for the dispatch of one or two influential persons, to talk with Nasser and other high-ranking officials. He instructed the three ambassadors to ensure that there would be as full a press coverage as possible of the proceedings of the trials so that Egypt would feel that the eyes of the world were upon it, and to try and bring about the dispatch of two or three prominent and independent foreign observers who would be present in the courtroom. He stressed that it was important that the British and United States embassies should express interest and concern over the trial. (Telegrams IWA976-7, 26 October 1954, 130.09/2310/8; No. 355, 26 October 1954, 130.09/2345/8.)

In reaction to these directives, Bendor warned from Paris that public action was liable to turn the affair into a matter of prestige for the Egyptians. Eban, in consultation with Shiloah and Harman, expressed doubt if Israel was interested in dispatching many journalists to the trial, lest they see justice done and were convinced that this was indeed a case of spying. On the other hand, he saw great potential value in Blaustein's mission and the American and British appeals in the name of the chances for peace between Egypt and Israel. (See telegrams from Bendor, 28 October 1954, 130.09/2345/4; and from Eban, WIA22, 27 October 1954, 93.01/2210/21.) In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs they agreed with Eban's view about the journalists. (See Eytan to Eban, 29 October 1954, 130.09/2310/8.)

435. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Ambassador in London. 26 October 1954

Coded Tel. 474; Outg.: 130.09/2320/1

Summary

Eytan adds to the previous telegram concerning the prisoners in Egypt.[1] In addition to public action through the Board of Deputies and the Anglo-Jewish Association political action should be instituted. This should be based on the call to Egypt not to stain with blood the independence the country had so recently attained. Such a call is appropriate from Britain. If it becomes apparent that the prisoners have been tortured, steps must be taken so that the Council for Civil Liberties should immediately be involved. Crossman could also help. Could he possibly meet with Nasser? Or perhaps there is someone else who could intervene. Care must be taken to ensure that public activities are of a Jewish or general character rather than Zionist.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 434.
2. On 1 November, embassy personnel held a meeting with the members of the Board of Deputies who announced that they were ready to undertake any action required of them. (Telegram from Elath, No. 123, 1 November 1954, 130.09/2320/2.) There is no report of any other action.

436. J. Tsur (Paris) to the West European Division. 26 October 1954

Coded Tel. 676; Inc.: 130.09/2345/4

Summary

Tsur reports on his meeting with Maillard. The French Foreign Ministry is concerned by Arab propaganda, and especially that of the Egyptians, concerning improvement of Franco-Israel relations. He hinted that it would be for the better if Israel did not publicize the friendly relations between the two countries and allowed actions to speak for themselves. They also spoke about the situation in the Middle East, the arrangement about blocked accounts, the *Bat Galim* episode, and the British proposal to mediate between Israel and the Arabs. On the latter point, Maillard requested that Tsur tell him frankly if negotiations were proceeding between Israel and Egypt.[3] When Tsur denied this, he asked that he be informed if such initiatives were taken. In the near future, they be consulting with their ambassador in Israel concerning trade negotiations and he considered French investments in Israel of importance. Tsur informs the Division that he would be meeting with Parodi and La Tournelle on the following day.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 386 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 442.
3. See No. 375.
4. Tsur had a talk with Parodi on 27 October and gave him a brief summary of Israel's grievances with the United States over the arming of the Arab states and with Britain over the Suez Canal issue. Parodi was pleased about the rapprochement between Israel and France, but said that he would prefer that this progress be based on tangible facts rather than on ostentatious concessions. He expressed general concern over the arms race in the region, and said that also the fact that Israel was purchasing a large amount of arms – a fact justified by the conditions – was not going to calm the fears of those concerned with peace in the Middle East. (See Tsur's telegram to the M.F.A., No. 679, 27 October 1954, 130.09/2345/4.)

   At a meeting with La Tournelle, the latter expressed great concern over the unbridled rivalry of Britain and the United States to win the friendship of the Arab states, which took the form of the supply of arms which would never be used for their defence against the Soviets. He told of the determined opposition of the British to the delivery of "Mystère" fighters to Israel, and the French counter-argument that the plane's quality would counterbalance the quantitative superiority of the Arabs. (See Tsur's telegram, No. 677, 28 October 1954, 130.09/2345/4.)

437. J. Tsur (Paris) to the West European Division. 26 October 1954

Copy: 130.10/2522/21

Summary

Tsur reports on Peres' meetings in Paris.[1] Peres had come to examine the imminent plans for purchase of arms in France and met with a number of ministers and senior officials in the ministries involved in the matter. It became apparent that at the moment there were no special problems and the question of artillery to be mounted on carriers is less complicated than was first thought.

Of special importance was Peres' meeting with the air minister, Catroux. The discussion was cordial and frank and terms were set for cooperation with the French Air Force in the area of training and technical assistance. In his meeting with Faure, problems were discussed of financing the increasing volume of Israeli arms purchases in France. Israel proposed prolonging the credit period from 3 to 6 years, reducing the interest rate and receiving direct aid from the French government as in the case of other countries purchasing arms in France against payment in dollars. Faure listened to the Israeli argument, made notes, and promised to reply after he had consulted with the experts in his Ministry. After further clarification, a reply to the request was promised in two weeks time.[2]

Notes

1. Peres arrived in Paris in order to deal with four urgent matters: the French government's refusal to deliver to Israel 30 cannons to mount on tanks, out of an order for 60 cannons; the delay in delivery of eight 155mm. cannons; receiving approval for the purchase of guided missiles; clarifying the financial basis of the purchases from France in the broadest possible manner with the French minister of finance. In talks at the Ministry of Defence and with manufacturers it transpired that, regarding the cannons for the tanks they could settle matters without referring to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but that it was still too early to talk about guided missiles, and that only the delay in delivery of the eight cannons originated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In a conversation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bendor was informed that the delay arose from the information possessed by the Ministry that there was an equal balance of power in the sphere of artillery between Israel and the Arab states. It was stressed that in any sale of arms the consideration was the balance of power, and it was explained clearly that this referred to the balance of power between Israel and ail the Arab states combined. At the same time, Peres was told in the Ministry of Defence that the delay in delivering the cannons was technical and practical, and that the order would go into production planning in

1955. (See Bendor to the director of the West European Division, 22 October 1954, 130.10/2522/21.) The delay in issuing a permit for the delivery of the cannons was referred to again in March 1955, in a conversation between Bendor and Mayer. (See Bendor to the director of the West European Division, 30 March 1955, 130.10./2522/21.)

2. In the Ministry of Foreign affairs files no information about this reply was traced. The subject of the terms of payment for weapons was one of the economic matters which Tsur tried to deal with in his meeting with the French prime minister on 9 December (See No. 535); J. Tsur, *Yoman Paris* (Paris Diary), pp. 107-108 [Hebrew]), but Mendès France refused and proposed that the matter be raised with the minister of finance.

438. Sh. Bentsur (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 26 October 1954

Copy: 130.02/2390/20

Summary

Bentsur writes about the episode of the Soviet delegation.[1] Fomin had visited the Ministry and submitted a statement on this matter [for text, see Main Volume, p. 728]. In the opinion of the East European Division, his statement revealed their desire to keep "the final say" for themselves, but at the same time not to turn the issue into a continuing conflict. In the light of this, the director-general doubted whether it was necessary to react to Fomin's statement at the Congress.[2] If the minister agrees with the director-general's doubts, the Division proposed that the matter be linked to a proposal by Israel to receive an official cultural delegation, so as not to exacerbate the tension.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 416.
2. In the welcoming speech delivered at the opening of the "Friendship Congress" on 22 October, Fomin expressed regret that the VOKS delegation could not come to the Congress for reasons beyond its control. In reply it was agreed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to summon Fomin and to express displeasure with his remarks which were interference in internal affairs from a public platform. On 24 October the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made public its recent proposal to the Soviets concerning the delegation which was designed to offer a positive way out of the impasse, and the fact that a reply had not been forthcoming to this proposal. (See memorandum from Aroch to Shek, 24 October 1954, 130.02/2390; telegrams of the

East European Division to the embassy in Moscow, No. 135, 137, 24-25 October 1954, 130.09/2326/1.)

3. See No. 500.

439. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 26 October 1954

Coded Tel. 18; Outg.: 93.01/2210/20

Summary

Rumours are increasing that the U.S. government considers the embassy and Government of Israel responsible for a campaign against the Administration concerning its Middle East policy. These are harmful to Israel's position in the U.S. He has therefore instructed all embassy staff to be cautious in statements and actions that could be construed as intervention in American domestic affairs on the eve of elections. More information will follow in a letter.[1] He suggests however that Sharett should not make a speech in the Knesset before the American elections and if he makes one – should not elaborate on the public campaign in the U.S. He should also influence official bodies and the press to act likewise.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 440.
2. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs did in fact instruct the missions and briefed the press in accordance with Eban's request. (See telegrams of the United States Division to Eban, IWA985, IWA989, 27 October 1954, 130.09/2310/8.)

440. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. [27 October 1954]

Orig.: CZA 245/631

Summary

Following his previous cable,[1] Eban reports that on 26 October he was summoned, rather dramatically and secretly, to a private meeting with the Secretary of State. After an embarrassing silence, Dulles informed Eban that according to information in his possession some of the Israeli embassy staff were acting with excessive zeal in a public relations and political campaign, far beyond the customary limitations imposed on foreigners as to

interference in the internal affairs of another country. He did not want to specify, in order not to make his allegations formal; however he advised Eban to check the activities of his subordinates carefully and he expressed his confidence that Eban would know how to put things right. Eban replied that he would pay attention to his remarks and added that Israel was in a delicate situation requiring it to make use of all possible support and understanding in the free world, and this could be done only through an information campaign. However, he would take care that the embassy should follow the conventional rules to the letter.

On his return to the embassy he summoned his staff and informed them that rumours and repercussions have reached him requiring the embassy to exercise extreme caution in its information efforts.

He adds, however, that though he has tried very hard to channel the propaganda activity of the embassy to the security aspect and to approaches by prominent leaders and political figures, there were others who were less aware of the sensitivity of the situation and urged more violent and dangerous methods. Golda Meyerson, who favoured mass meetings and censured the embassy for its insufficient and "timid" efforts headed this school. The lesson from all this is that guidelines and strategy of the propaganda campaign should be determined by the government, but the tactics on the ground should be left to the embassy.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 439.
2. Two sentences, consisting of a personal evaluation, were deleted by the editors.
3. The remainder of the paragraph, consisting of a personal evaluation, was deleted by the editors.
4. Compare with the secretary of state's record of this conversation – *FRUS 1952-54*, Vol. IX (Part 1), No. 910.

441. Consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (Jerusalem, 27 October 1954)

Minutes: 130.02/3694/9

Summary

Participating in the consultation were the minister of foreign affairs, the minister of finance, the director-general of the Ministry of Finance, Mr. P. Sapir, the director-general of the Prime Minister's Office, Mr. T. Kollek,

Messrs. Blass and Wiener of the Tahal water company and senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials.

The minister of foreign affairs reported on the American demand that Israel allow a 5-6 man survey team to examine the southern sector of Lake Tiberias to determine the relevancy of the Lake to the Yarmuk project and to examine the possibility of using the Lake as a general reservoir. In the past, Israel had objected to this demand, but since Johnston had insisted, stating that he could not continue without this survey, he had raised the issue again.[1] There are two problems relating to this demand: (a) the precedent of Americans operating in Israeli territory, and (b) that agreement to the team coming could be construed as agreement to its conclusions.

During the discussion, a feeling of unease at the request was expressed, as well as some of the dangers that the activities of such a team could cause, but it would seem that there was no escape from agreeing to it. A decision was postponed until after a discussion with the engineer, Criddle.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 214 and notes.
2. The conversation was held on 16 September (See Eban's telegram to the United States Division, WIA865, 16 September 1954, 130.02/3688/6.)
3. This refers to Jordanian protests against the erection of two pumping stations on the Jordan River, one next to Beit Yosef and the other next to the Sheikh Hussain Bridge. The Jordanians didn't lodge an official complaint, but on 1 November the Jordanian minister of foreign affairs made a protest on the same issue in a meeting with the ambassadors of the three Western Powers. (See Tekoah's telegram to the Israel legations, 1 November 1954, 130.09/2310/8.)
4. Engineer Criddle arrived in Israel on 27 October after visiting Jordan, Lebanon and Syria with the aim of giving Johnston an opinion on the technical problems around which the dispute between the Israeli experts and Johnston's experts revolved. The main problems were: the size of the territory worth irrigating in the Arab Jordan Valley, and the water consumption per dunam in that same region, and the water that Israel was demanding over and above the allotment – the water that would be produced by draining the Hula Lake and re-used for irrigating the Hula valley and the water returning after use in the fishponds. To this end, he held talks with the experts in Israel and toured the area. (See the telegram from the United States Division to the embassy in Washington, IW1, 1 November 1954, 130.09/2310/8.)
5. See No. 457.

442. A. Eban [New York] to the President of the Security Council. 27 October 1954

Notes

1. Published as U.N. Document S/3310.
2. See No. 412 (Editorial Note).
3. See No. 395.
4. No. 389.
5. In a telegram of 25 October (U.N. Document S/3309) Burns reported to the Security Council about the state of affairs with regard to the *Bat Galim* incident: in view of the Egyptian complaint and the Israeli demand (See No. 405) the chairman of the Israel-Egypt Armistice Commission decided to conduct investigations. The investigation reports were given to the parties. In response to the Israeli demand, the Commission chairman also decided to call an emergency meeting. At the meeting, held on 22 and 23 October, the Egyptian representative argued that the emergency meeting that had been convened in response to the Israeli demand was not legal, and that the Israeli demand could not force a discussion on the Egyptian complaint or on the investigations conducted on the Egyptian side of the border at an emergency session that had not been convened at Egypt's request. Burns decided to report to the Council on the state of affairs when he learnt, in an unofficial discussion with the two delegations on 25 October, that the Egyptian position remained unchanged.
6. In a letter dated 29 October to the president of the Security Council (U.N. Document S/3311), Azmi, the Egyptian U.N. representative, rejected Eban's claims and said that in the Burns report there was nothing to indicate that Egypt was taking steps to thwart the debate in the Commission. He announced that his government deemed it essential to convene the Commission urgently, and that it should meet, even on a daily basis, to rule on the questions still pending before it, including that of the *Bat Galim,* and had already instructed its representative on the Commission to transmit this request to the Commission chairman.

   Thus on 30 October the Egyptian representative appealed in a letter to the Commission chairman, requesting that the Commission be convened to discuss the Egyptian complaint as soon as possible. The Israeli representative argued that according to procedure this complaint could be given first priority, but the Egyptian representative insisted that first of all they had to discuss all the 83 complaints which were on the agenda. (See Ramati's memorandum on the discussion on the Egyptian complaint, 9 November 1954, 130.02/2436/7, and the report of the chief of staff of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization to the U.N. secretary-general, 10 November 1954, U.N. Document S/3315.) On the debate on the *Bat Galim* affair in the Armistice Commission see No. 487; on the debate in the Security Council – see No. 448 (Editorial Note).

443. A. Eban [Washington] to J.F. Dulles (Washington). 29 October 1954

Notes

1. See No. 403 and n. 4. On the argument over the reply to Dulles's letter, see No. 420 and n. 7.
2. See No. 427, n. 3, and No. 430, n. 1.
3. The reference is to remarks made by Anthony Nutting, the minister of state in the Foreign Office, at a news conference in Cairo on 21 October, after he had signed the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement on behalf of Britain. The two following statements troubled the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Israel: regarding the freedom of passage through the Suez Canal, he said that his government disputed Egypt's right to detain ships bearing non-military cargoes through the Suez Canal to Israel. (The concern in Israel was that this statement would imply Egypt's right to stop military cargoes.) As regards the defence of the Middle East, he said that the Arab League's Collective Security Pact and the Turkish-Pakistani Pact were equal in value from the standpoint of the interest of the free world. (*Ha'aretz,* 22 October 1954.)

   In a conversation in the British Foreign Office the embassy people were told that there was no change whatever in Britain's position, and it continued to oppose any interference with shipping in the Canal, whether it involved civilian or military cargoes. As regards the Collective Security Pact, they explained that Nutting had intended to say that its aim was to contribute to the security of the free world, after the model of the Turkish-Pakistan Pact, and it did not need to have any other function. (See Gazit to Lourie, 29 October 1954, 130.13/2599/5.)
4. Dulles replied briefly that he was giving the matter intensive study on an overall basis and would suggest a meeting when their ideas would be sufficiently organized to make the meeting useful to him. At the same time, if there were other aspects of the matter which Eban wished to acquaint him with, he should not hesitate to fix a meeting. (The letter, dated 12 November, in file 130.02/2456/16.) See also No. 478, n. 1.

444. J. Tsur (Paris) to the West European Division. 29 October 1954

Orig.: 130.10/2520/11

Summary

Tsur reports on the American Jewish Committee delegation, consisting of Blaustein, Engel and Slawson which was visiting Tunisia and Morocco. Tsur had spoken to them prior to their leaving. It became apparent that the members of the delegation set out with a number of commonly held

American preconceptions about the situation in North Africa. Their main opinion was that these were heart and soul democratic peoples who wished to liberate themselves from the yoke of colonial oppression. They believed that it would be best for the Jews of these countries to continue to live among their Muslim brethren. Mass immigration to Israel should not be encouraged, mainly so as not to enlarge the Jewish community in Israel which would increase friction with the Arabs.

In the course of the discussion with them, Tsur and his colleagues endeavoured to explain that the fate of the Jews of these countries was dependent upon the fate of the French regime, and it would be better both for the Jewish communities of these countries and for Israel, if American Jewry reduced its opposition to the French and supported the continuation of the French regime in Morocco and Tunisia. If the national leaders of these countries meet with the delegation, they should be persuaded to guarantee not only the civil rights of the Jewish inhabitants in any proposed constitution, but also freedom of emigration to any country, freedom to take their possessions out of the country, and freedom for cultural and political activities.

Tsur states that Blaustein and his colleagues agreed that even if these Jews did not reveal a desire to immigrate to Israel, no Jew has the right to take upon himself the authority to prevent their immigration if they are forced to leave as a result of circumstances or from fear that this possibility would be denied them in the future. Thus they believe that the problem of immigration should be left solely to the Jews' inclinations and their decision, and that no action be taken that might prevent this possibility.

445. Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Defence. 1 November 1954

Copy: CZA245/195

Summary

Sharett writes about Dayan's meeting with the chief of staff of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization which was to take place the next day.

They must decide on the line to be followed with regard to two current matters. A government decision exists about the compromise to be sought regarding patrols by U.N. Observers.[1] As for the Local Commanders' Agreement in Jerusalem, it was Israel that complicated the issue by refusing to sign the agreement simply because the U.N. representative was about to

sign it as a witness.[2] Care must be taken to ensure that Israel is not blamed for the failure, especially as it was Israel that initiated the entire agreement. He suggests, therefore, that they do not insist on this point. On the other hand, they must insist firmly that the Mount Scopus area be included in the agreement.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 367 and notes 1 and 4.
2. See No. 414.
3. At a meeting with Burns on 2 November, Dayan adopted a moderate line. Regarding the Observer patrols he suggested a formula whereby each party to the Armistice Agreement would be allowed to ask the chief of staff of the Truce Supervision Organization to send Observers accompanied by officers of that side to the border area in which the situation, in the view of that party, called for such a visit. Furthermore, the chief of staff could ask each party to organize a visit by Observers, accompanied by officers of that party, to the border area in which the situation necessitated such a visit, and the visit would require the agreement of the side being called upon. With regard to the Local Commanders' Agreement in Jerusalem, Dayan suggested leaving the issue of the presence of the U.N. personnel at the commanders' meetings up to the commanders themselves and to delete from the Agreement the paragraph relating to meetings. As for Mount Scopus, on the other hand, he adopted an unequivocal position against excluding the Mount from the context of the Commanders Agreement. (See Tekoah to the Israel embassy in Washington, telegram 582, 3 November 1954, 130.09/2312/8.) See also Nos. 499, 504.

446. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Paris and the Israel Legation in Rome. 1 November 1954

Coded Tel. 385; Outg.: 130.09/2345/8

Summary

Rafael reports on developments in the matter of the release of blocked accounts belonging to refugees. An agreement in principle had been signed with the Ottoman Bank and Barclay's Bank on 26 September,[1] but Israel delayed its implementation in order to gain political capital by including representatives of the Congress of Palestinian Refugees in the negotiation and execution of the agreement. Representatives of the Congress had applied to the Conciliation Commission with the aim of conducting direct negotiations, but their request had been rejected.[2] Following negotiations with Israel, the agreement had been signed[3] and would be submitted that day to the Commission.[4,5]

Notes

1. See No. 386 (Editorial Note).
2. See No. 333 and n. 3. After a considerable delay the Commission informed the representatives of the Congress of Palestinian Refugees that it saw no need to meet them since the banks had announced that they were prepared to release the accounts without any further negotiation. (See Palmon to Rafael, 14 October 1954, 130.09/2345/4.)
3. The agreement was initialed in Paris on 16 October. Rafael considered the signing of the agreement a landmark in relations with the Arabs, since this was the first time that Israel had achieved an agreement with the other side in direct negotiations, and warned that every disappointment they would experience would strike a resounding blow against any possibility of progress to broader arrangements. Kidron believed that the signing of a direct agreement with the representatives of the depositors rendered the Conciliation Commission superfluous in carrying out the release of the blocked accounts. (See Rafael to Kidron, telegram 514, 13 October 1954; telegram 553, 25 October 1954, 130.09/2331/6; Kidron to Rafael, telegram 241, 21 October 1954, 130.09/2331/13.)
4. See No. 447.
5. See ibid., n. 4. The Israeli move in this affair did not please the Department of State officials who, in a conversation with Eban, complained that Israel was complicating a matter on which agreement had already been reached, demanded that it remove the new condition of including representatives of the Congress of Palestinian Refugees and expressed doubt about the Congress's representative character. Eban, in reply, stressed the importance of direct negotiation with Arabs that could serve as an example for the resolution of the compensation issue in the future. (See Shimoni to the United States Division, telegram WNT82, 1 November 1954, 93.01/2210/22.) See also No. 462.

447. M. Kidron (New York) to the Chairman of the Palestine Conciliation Commission. 1 November 1954

Notes

1. No. 333.
2. See No. 386 (Editorial Note).
3. See No. 446, the memorandum is attached to the file.
4. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs made public of the delivery of the Note on 3 November. The spokesman, who described the letter as announcing the beginning of the release of the blocked accounts, stated that negotiations were being conducted between Israel and the Executive Committee of the General Congress of the Palestinian Refugees, and noted that this was the first time that Israel had conducted negotiations with the representatives of the refugees themselves without the mediation of the Arab governments. Together with the announcement details were also supplied in the press concerning the release procedures. After further

negotiation the banks agreed that the Congress of Palestinian Refugees would deal with all those requests for which it would receive power of attorney from depositors. Israel issued a statement to this effect on 16 November, which was worded by agreement with Barclay's Bank and detailed the final arrangements for releasing the accounts. When this statement was made, the release of the accounts entered a practical stage. (See reports to the Israel missions abroad, 29 November 1954, 130.0920/2474/11.)

448. Editorial Note

Resumption of the Debate in the Security Council Regarding the Israeli Complaint over Egyptian Restrictions on the Freedom of Navigation in the Suez Canal, and the Detention of the Bat Galim.

On 3 November 1954, the Security Council convened to continue the debate on the Israeli complaint over the Egyptian restrictions in the Suez Canal. (On the earlier debate see No. 412, Editorial Note). The Council was convened following receipt of a telegram from the chief of staff of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization and the requests of the Israeli delegation – See No. 442. The representatives of Israel and Egypt were invited to the session. Eban, who was the first speaker, demanded that the Council instruct Egypt to immediately release the *Bat Galim* vessel with its crew. He argued that there were no grounds for the Egyptian accusation, and blamed Egypt for employing delaying tactics in order to prevent the presentation of the report of the Armistice Commission on the incident. Azmi, the Egyptian representative, argued that the question of freedom of navigation was not a subject for debate in the Security Council, and all that Egypt was asking was for the chairman of the Armistice Commission to decide regarding the Egyptian complaint which was before the Commission. He declared that Egypt would not prevent neutral ships from passing through the Canal, but would not permit Israeli ships to do so.

After the statements of the two parties, the debate was opened, during which the participants stressed the need to speed up the discussion in the Armistice Commission so that its report would be presented to the Council by the end of the month. The debate in the Council was suspended suddenly after Azmi collapsed in the course of his reply to the statements of the representatives. Later on Azmi passed away. (See *SCOR, Ninth Year,* 683rd, 684th meetings, 3 November 1954). On the continuation of the debate in the Security Council and the Armistice Commission see No. 463.

449. Y. Shimoni (Washington) to the United States Division. 3 November 1954

Notes

1. A similar meeting on the same matter was held the next day in London with the British minister of state. Nutting explained, as had Dulles, that the presenting of credentials in Jerusalem had no political significance, and Britain had no intention to transfer its embassy from Tel Aviv. He added that the decision regarding the presenting of credentials in Jerusalem had been taken after consultations with France and the United States.

   The new British ambassador, J.W. Nicholls, presented his credentials to the president of the state at a ceremony held on 10 November, at the president's residence in Jerusalem; the new United States ambassador, E.B. Lawson, presented his credentials at the same place on 12 November.

450. Sh. Eliashiv (Moscow) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 3 November 1954

Coded Tel. 302; Inc.: 130.09/2326/2

Summary

Eliashiv reports that an exceptionally large number of passports had been received from the Soviet Foreign Ministry with requests for visas to Israel. He wondered whether this was evidence of a development requiring consideration and action by Israel. It may well be that an overall decision had been taken to give positive replies to requests which had awaited a decision for some time. In his opinion, steps should be taken discreetly in Israel to urge relatives in the Soviet Union to submit requests for immigration. This should be done especially for those living in Bessarabia and Czernowitz, because conditions exist there facilitating such immigration.

451. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 4 November 1954

Coded Tel. 6[9]9; Inc. 130.09/2345/4

Summary

Tsur cables about the prisoners in Egypt.[1] After considering the matter, he had decided that he would not himself write to the Nuncio Marella but would send Donati.[2] The Nuncio listened with particular interest and expressed his willingness to help. He requested that a memorandum be sent to Tardini.[3] In an accompanying letter he would request that the Nuncio in Cairo be instructed to talk to Ambassador Caffery. The memorandum would be sent that morning. Tsur is waiting for news from Blaustein who was expected to return to Paris the following evening.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 434 and n. 1.
2. Following the instructions to act on behalf of the prisoners, Tsur appealed to Donati, an Italian-Jewish banker in Paris, to use his connections with the Vatican so that they would instruct their Nuncio in Cairo to persuade the United States ambassador there, Jefferson Caffrey, to intervene on their behalf with the Egyptian authorities. Donati travelled to Rome, but his attempt to meet with Montini, who was shortly due to end his term as acting head of the Secretariat of State of the Vatican, was unsuccessful, and the talks in the Vatican did not leave much room for hope for intervention in Cairo, particularly since at the head of the nunciature there was only an appointee with little influence. On the other hand, they suggested using the Nuncio in Dublin, Monsignor Lavame, who in the past had occupied the same post in Cairo. Tsur, who knew Lavame from the time they both had served in Montevideo, was dubious about his goodwill and readiness to help. (See Tsur to Eytan, telegram 690, 31 October 1954, 130.09/2345/4.)
3. Cardinal Domenico Tardini, the acting secretary of state of the Vatican.
4. See No. 459.

452. B. Givli (I.D.F.) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 4 November 1954

Copy: 130.02/2387/7

Summary

Givli reports that Gorse and General Boissilier (spelling uncertain) had left for Cairo. The French Foreign Ministry had received confirmation of their meeting with Nasser and Salih Salim.[1] In the meantime he was being urged to carry out activities in Italy and the United States, and especially to organize direct contact in the U.S. between the military attachés there of Israel and Egypt.[3] In the case of the accused Max Benett, the Germans should be involved, as he is a German citizen.

Notes

1. George Gorse, a member of the Union Française and a past under-secretary of state for Moslem Affairs, went to Egypt on 3 November in order to explain to Egypt that parliamentary circles in France were worried by the arrests and feared that Egypt was making a grave mistake if it passed the death sentence. Gorse's mission received the blessing of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which also wished to use his help in the matter of Franco-Egyptian relations, even though at first in Israel they did not favour sending him since his contacts in Egypt had been with members of the old regime and Naguib. His companion, General Boissilier, who apparently was being sent on an official mission for the National Ministry of Defence to visit military cemeteries, was also due to meet with Nasser and with Salih Salim and to tell them about the bad effect that death sentences in the trial of the Israeli sabotage network would be liable to have. (See memorandum of A. Hareven to the director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 3 November 1954, 130.02/2387/7; Eytan to the Paris embassy, telegram 364, 28 October 1954, 130.09/2345/8; Tsur to Eytan, telegram 689, 29 November 1954, 130.09/2345/4.)
2. On the activities in Rome see No. 451. Eytan replied that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had further instructed the Rome legation to send the Israeli consul in Milan, Mayer, to Cardinal Roncalli, the Patriarch of Venice, and they were also trying to involve Archbishop Galliaci and get him to obtain the Pope's backing. (See Eytan to Givli, 5 November 1954, 130.02/2387/7.)
3. The meeting between Salmon and the Egyptian military attaché in Washington, al-Shafi, was held on 15 December. Salmon presented his arguments, al-Shafi promised to convey them to Cairo but noted that it was already too late to intervene, since the affair had been debated judicially and in public. (See Salmon to the M.F.A. for Givli, 15 December 1954, 130.09/2310/12.)

453. A. Eban (New York) to J. Herzog. 4 November 1954

Coded Tel. XA302; Outg.: 93.01/2210/20

Summary

Eban sends some reflections on the United States elections.[1] Israel's position had been strengthened not so much from the results of the elections but as a consequence of the process that preceded them, which brought extensive expressions of support for Israel and concern for its fate. Some of the consequences of the election campaign still persisted even after the smoke had cleared. Of importance was the fact that a considerable number of representatives in Congress remain committed to opposing the policy of arming the Arabs. In future talks with Dulles, it will be necessary to take into consideration the administration's displeasure with Israel and its impressions of the extent of the support Israel had received. As for the changes in personnel in the various committees of Congress, this has not been to Israel's advantage, since staunch Republican supporters had been replaced by unfriendly Democrats.[3]

Notes

1. The elections to the House of Representatives and the Senate in the United States held on 2 November, ended with the victory of the Democratic Party, which won a majority in both Houses of Congress. In the elections for the state governors, the Democrats also won a majority.
2. The reference is apparently to the request of Irving Ives, the Republican candidate for the post of governor of the state of New York, for an explicit declaration by the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Wiley, regarding the Republican Party's attitude to the Palestine question. Replying by letter, Wiley asserted that the United States would assist in preventing any further aggression in the future against the State of Israel and that all aid given to the Arabs on the part of the United States would be accompanied by guarantees against the aggressive use of the weapons. (See *Ha'aretz*, 27 October 1954.)
3. Shiloah also cabled similar conclusions after the elections. In his opinion the administration and the Republican Party had been profoundly impressed by the devotion and anxiety of the Jews of the United States for Israel, and there was no doubt in their minds that the disappointment and anger of the Jews had sealed the fate of the elections in several places, as for example in New York. Many prominent people, and particularly those from the Near Eastern Affairs Office in the Department of State were very angry with the Israel embassy for supposedly having encouraged the Jewish emotion, and wished to repay Israel in kind. On the other hand, many were already speculating about the forthcoming presidential elections in 1956 and the need to win Jewish support once again. (See Shiloah to Herzog, WIA51, 4 November 1954, 93.01/2210/20.)

454. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to E. Elath (London). 5 November 1954

Coded Tel. 547; Outg.: 130.09/2320/1

Summary

Following his brief report by telegram,[1] Sharett reports at length on his introductory meeting with the new British ambassador, Nicholls. Two issues were discussed: Eden's statement in Parliament on the Three Power Declaration and the Egyptian attacks against Israel during the past two months. Sharett stated in regard to the first item that this declaration was faulty in that it was drawn up without consultation with Israel. The legal background of such a commitment is not clear and the specific queries submitted by Israel remained unanswered in the Note Eden had sent to Israel.[3] Nicholls replied that perhaps it would be best to leave matters as they were and that the problem of relations between the two countries should remain open. He asked if he was to send Israel's query to London with a request for a reply, and Sharett replied that it would be sufficient if he were to report their discussion and that it can be assumed that Israel would reply with a Note of its own.[4]

Sharett further stated that as regards the Egyptian matter, Israel was using restraint but its patience was running out.[5] He pointed out that in signing the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement, Britain had taken upon itself a degree of responsibility for Egyptian actions. He suggested that perhaps Nasser should send a senior officer to Gaza to impose order. Nicholls denied that it was Britain's responsibility, but agreed that its influence in Egypt had increased and promised to pass on Sharett's suggestion.[6]

Notes

1. In this telegram there is a brief initial report on Sharett's meeting with Nicholls, the new British ambassador. The conversation focused mainly on Eden's statement in Parliament on 2 November, at the end of the debate on the Middle East.

   In answer to questions from the members of Parliament, Eden stressed the significance of the 1950 Three Power Declaration. Regarding the arms consignments after the signing of the agreement with Egypt, he said that Britain would only give arms on the basis of the Declaration, namely that it would continue to maintain the balance between Israel and all the Arab states together. As for the commitment to come to Israel's assistance if it was attacked by an Arab state, he stressed that the declaration committed Britain (as well as France and the United States) to come to Israel's aid, and the same applied in the opposite case, if an Arab state was attacked by Israel.

Sharett said that this was an important statement but it required clarification. The commitment to come to Israel's aid if attacked implied certain relations, and the matter required agreement about the circumstances, conditions and extent under which such assistance would be given. (See Lourie's telegram to the Israel embassy in London, 4 November 1954, 130.09/2320/1.) According to Nicholls's report of the conversation, Sharett requested clarification as to whether Britain would intervene even if no request for intervention were received from the Israeli government. (P.R.O., F.O. 371/111106.)

2. See No. 285.
3. See No. 424.
4. See No. 470 and n. 4.
5. From the end of September until the beginning of November, Egyptian attacks in the Gaza area intensified again. On the attack on 25 September see No. 387 and notes 1-3. On 25 September, a water pipe near Mefalsim was blown up and the Armistice Commission expressed grave concern about the repeated damage caused to the water pipes in the Negev. On 29 September, Israeli Bedouins were attacked by armed Egyptians and an Israeli patrol killed 3 of the attackers and took one of them prisoner. On 30 September an Israeli patrol was attacked near Nirim by fire from across the border, and on 1 November two empty houses in Moshav Patish were blown up.
6. Eytan conveyed a similar message to Russell, the American chargé d'affaires, and Najar handed it to Debroise, the French chargé d'affaires, and to Istinyeli, the Turkish minister. (See Eytan to the embassy in Washington, 3 November 1954, 130.09/2312/8; the West European Division to the Paris embassy, 4 November 1954, 130.09/2345/8, and to the legation in Ankara, telegram 287, 4 November 1954, 130.09/2289/10.) The reply of the United States see No. 460.

455. E. Elath (London) to A. Lourie. 5 November 1954

Coded Tel. 141; Outg.: 93.04/40/17

Summary

Elath reports that in a conversation with Eden which took place at a reception, the latter asked him if Israel was pleased with his recent statement in Parliament.[1] He added that his concern was to maintain peace and advance Israel's ties with its neighbours. He asked with concern if there was any truth to the rumours that Israel was planning to send three ships through the Suez Canal. Although Israel has every right to do so, and Egypt has no right to detain them, he sees no benefit to be gained by sending these vessels which will undoubtedly be detained, and no one can persuade the Egyptians to act otherwise. Elath replied that he was not aware of such plans and reiterated Israel's claim concerning the right of free navigation. Elath concluded with a request to hold an orderly discussion on the questions that

had been raised in Parliament and Eden replied that he would be delighted to talk to him.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 454 and n. 1.
2. See No. 461.
3. See No. 498 and n. 1.

456. M. Kidron (New York) to G. Rafael. 5 November 1954

Coded Tel. 314; Inc.: 130.09/2331/14

Summary

Kidron cables regarding the continuation of dealing with the *Bat Galim* episode. In order to expedite a solution, approaches should be made by eight members of the Security Council to the Israel-Egypt Mixed Armistice Commission. Six such approaches had already been submitted prior to the Egyptian representative's collapse during the course of the debate. A further two are required. Thus there is no choice but to continue the debate in the Security Council.[1] Because of various procedural measures the convening of the Council would be postponed for some time, at least to the end of the year and perhaps even longer. He suggests that they should not remain idle during this period. There was no purpose in sending an additional Israeli ship that would certainly be confiscated. He thus repeats his earlier proposal of sending through the Canal an oil tanker flying a foreign flag.[2,4]

Notes

1. See No. 498 (Editorial Note.) For the subsequent treatment of the *Bat Galim* incident in the Security Council and in the Armistice Commission see No. 463 and notes.
2. See No. 417 and n. 3.
3. Kozlov was prepared to attend to the procuring of an old tanker at rock bottom price and purchasing Persian crude oil for the first attempt. He noted the possibility of obtaining funding from the American Grant-in-Aid for this purpose, if they wished to involve the American government in the matter. (See his telegram to the M.F.A, No. 130, 5 November 1954, 130.16/2952/7.)
4. Sharett on the other hand, had doubts about the wisdom of preferring a foreign tanker to an Israeli vessel. After all, the Egyptians had from the outset declared oil to be war materiel, and there was at least the same chance that they would confiscate the foreign tanker just as they had confiscated an Israeli ship. Moreover, since they

had needed in the case of the *Bat Galim* to fabricate the shooting in order to detain the vessel, presumably they did not see an Israeli flag alone as sufficient grounds for confiscation. Therefore he asked Eban and Kidron to immediately make their position known. (See Sharett to the Israel Mission to the U.N., Y616, 7 November 1954, 130.09/2331/7.)

457. United States Division (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 5 November 1954

Coded Tel. IW26; Outg.: 130.02/2310/8

Summary

The Division replies to Eban's cable about the survey mission dealing with the Johnston plan.[1] A week ago, White and Criddle[2] had been told that if Johnston's request was reduced to two American experts who would join local surveyors, Israel could recommend the government to agree. Israel hoped that Johnston had not deviated from his undertaking that no work would be carried out on the Yarmuk River without a general agreement, otherwise Israel would itself carry out preparations to complete a separate plan for the Yarmuk. The Americans promised a reply from the Department of State. In the meantime, the Department of State had confirmed Johnston's undertaking regarding the Yarmuk River. Eban was authorized to state that following upon this undertaking the request would be agreed to in accordance with the directives approved by the government. He would send a separate telegram summarizing Criddle's mission, and detailing the conversation with White on the Johnston plan in general.[3]

Notes

1. Eban demanded emphatically that an answer be given to Johnston concerning the survey – see No. 441. He entreated the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to hasten to send a positive reply, and could not for a moment imagine that a negative reply would be given, which would place the responsibility for the failure of the plan on Israel. (See his telegram of 1 November 1954, 130.09/2310/12.)
2. On the Criddle mission see No. 441, n. 4.
3. In a conversation with Criddle, in the presence of White, the counsellor in the United States embassy, White asked if there was any change in Israel's position regarding the amount of Jordan River water which it was demanding for itself vis à vis the position it had adopted in the past. The Israeli reply was negative. (See the United States Division to Eban and Shiloah, IW33, 7 November 1954, 130.09/2310/8.) See also No. 473.

458. M. Leshem (Rangoon) to the Asia Division. 5 November 1954

Copy: 130.02/2413/30

Summary

Leshem reports on a meeting with the Chinese ambassador in Rangoon. He had explained the reasoning for Israel's votes concerning China in the United Nations.[1] The ambassador accepted the explanation but referred to two points of concern to him. First of all, the argument that the time was not right as there was no chance of a positive resolution. He stressed that a stand in principle should be maintained even if there were no chance that it would be accepted. Secondly, Israel's abstention on the matter of confirmation of China's credentials. Leshem explained as best he could. The conversation then moved on to the issue of the delegation to China.[2] As Leshem did not have any news for the ambassador he avoided the issue. In Leshem's opinion, the ambassador was less congenial than in the past.[3]

Notes

1. On Eytan's instruction, Leshem, the chargé d'affaires in Rangoon, met with the Chinese ambassador there on 25 September in order to explain the Israeli vote in the United Nations concerning the China issue (see No. 378 and notes). He stressed that there had been no change in Israel's basic position that the Peking government had the legal right to represent the Chinese people in international institutions. The Chinese representative expressed satisfaction that Leshem had been sent to explain the case, saw in this a sign that in fact there had been a mistake made here and misunderstanding of instructions, and that Israel supported the principle of the admission of China to the United Nations, and said that he would report in this spirit to his government. (See Leshem to the Asia Division, 27 September 1954; telegram 95, 8 November 1954, both in 93.13/226/3.)
2. See No. 371 and notes there.
3. The Chinese government's reaction to Leshem's explanation – See No. 472 and n. 1.

459. G. Rafael (Paris) to M. Sharett. 7 November 1954

Coded Tel. 625; Inc.: 130.09/2345/4

Summary

Rafael reports on difficulties regarding Blaustein's mission.[1] Because of events in Egypt and arrests of members of the Moslem Brotherhood,[2] objections had been expressed to his mission. Nasser believes that the time is not right and at the most is prepared to receive him as a tourist. After consulting with him, Blaustein had telephoned Byroade and proposed as a compromise that he would be prepared to go to Cairo as Caffery's guest on condition that a meeting would be arranged with Nasser, in return for an undertaking that there would be no publicity whatsoever.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 433 and notes.
2. On 26 October, an attempt was made on the life of Nasser by a member of the Moslem Brotherhood organization. Following this, the organization was disbanded and many of its members arrested and put on trial. On 4 December, seven of the accused, including the organization's leader, Sheikh Hasan Ismail al Hudaibi, were sentenced to death for the crime of plotting to overthrow the revolutionary regime. The sentence on al Hudaibi was commuted to life imprisonment, but the six others were executed on 7 December.
3. The next day Rafael reported that Blaustein had that day received two telegrams: one from Byroade informing him that unfortunately the reports from Cairo indicated that there was no usefulness in his visit, and the second from Caffrey – that Nasser could not receive him, but would have no objection to his coming as a tourist. Blaustein, angry and insulted, decided to return to the United States, requesting that in the meantime the affair be kept secret, in case it would be possible to visit on another occasion later on. He promised Rafael to demand that the Department of State should intervene in the matter. (See telegrams from Rafael to Sharett, No. 628, 8 November 1954 and to Eytan, No. 633, 9 November 1954, both in 130.09/2345/4.) Rafael instructed Shiloah to hold Blaustein to his word and to exploit his insult in order to make the Department of State acutely aware of the weakness of the Egyptian government, and to maintain that it was not deserving of support and trust. (See Rafael to Shiloah, PWA45, 10 November 1954, 93.01/2210/20.) See also No. 489.

460. Israel Embassy in Washington to the United States Division. 8 November 1954

Notes

1. See No. 454 and n. 5.
2. Russell conveyed the remarks to Eytan, verbally, on 7 November. In response to Eytan's question he said that the appeal to Egypt was being made just then, and therefore there was no answer yet. (See Eytan's report on the conversation, 8 January 1954, 130.16/2951/11.)
3. On 3 November, General Burns gave Sgan-Aluf Ramati written proposals for easing the tension on the border of the Gaza Strip: (a) joint daily border patrols of Israelis and Egyptians, accompanied by a U.N. Observer; (b) signing a Local Commanders' Agreement like that with Jordan of December 1953; (c) the positions on both sides of the border to be manned by regular army Israeli and Egyptian soldiers i.e, not Palestinians on the Egyptian side (d) fencing the border. Burns suggested also that Ramati meet with Gohar to discuss the matter before the meeting of the Israel-Egypt Armistice Commission that had been set for 11 November. (See Ramati report, 3 November 1954, Tekoah's telegram to the Israel missions abroad, 4 November 1954, both in 130.16/2948/17.)

461. E. Elath (London) to M. Sharett. 8 November 1954

Coded Tel. 150; Outg.: 93.04/40/17

Summary

Elath cables some thoughts on his forthcoming meeting with Eden.[1] He proposes to request a written undertaking that in the event of an attack on Israel, Britain would come to its aid immediately, if Israel makes a specific request. He writes that he had come to this conclusion after careful consideration and rejection of other possibilities such as being content with the Three Power Declaration; proposing to Britain a military pact to include bases in Israel; that they be permitted to join the Balkan Pact;[2] to continue to maintain a negative attitude to the Three Power Declaration without presenting alternative proposals on behalf of Israel. He had reached this conclusion when he had realized that this would be acceptable to Britain. This undertaking would not have the official stamp of a military pact and would enable Israel to continue to maintain freedom of action. It would also not be interpreted by the Arabs as a new political or military act in contradiction to Britain's pacts with Iraq and Jordan. It would strengthen the Three Power Declaration by an unambiguous undertaking and would lead to

contacts with Britain that would be binding, and which will allow, in time, the forging of stronger ties.

Elath points out that there is no guarantee that his proposal would be accepted, but he would put it to Eden. It is possible that Eden would reply that the military aspects of the proposal will have to be examined. At all events if accepted this would be a major political and security victory for Israel.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 455.
2. See No. 348 and n. 1.
3. The meeting with Eden was fixed for 9 November, but because of an office error Elath was late for the meeting and met with the new Deputy Foreign Secretary, Robert Turton – see No. 467.

462. E. Elath (London) to W. Eytan. 8 November 1954

Coded Tel. 151; Outg.: 93.04/40/14

Summary

Elath reports on his meeting with Cowling who is responsible for Jordan affairs in the British Foreign Office. Cowling said that they were concerned over Israel's support of the Congress of Palestinian Refugees as the intermediary between the refugees and the banks in the matter of the blocked accounts.[1] The Conciliation Commission had already stated that it is only able to deal with governments, and the banks have stated that they are not prepared to negotiate with the Congress except in cases where it holds a power of attorney from the refugees. Support by Israel for the Congress would make a bad impression on Jordan as they consider it an unnecessary intermediary. If the Congress were a recognized and respected body the situation would be different, but this was not the case. The Congress is suspected of being corrupt and apparently Israel is not aware of the attitude of the refugees to the Congress. He understands Israel's motives, but its actions will be detrimental to its own interests in Jordan. He also referred to the assets in the safe deposit boxes and said that the opening of the safes should not be connected to the release of deposits. In the meantime, it is not clear if Jordan would allow the owners of safe deposit boxes to go to Israel to be present when they are opened. This information was cabled to Rafael in Paris.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 446.
2. This apparently refers to the severe resolutions of censure adopted, one at a gathering of refugees in Nablus, and the second at a meeting of refugee property owners in Ramallah, in condemnation of the Congress of Palestinian Refugees which purported to represent the refugees, and the negotiations it was conducting with Israel. (See Landau to Rafael, telegram 442, 10 November 1954, 130.09/2345/8.)
3. In reaction to the conversation Rafael stressed the importance he attached to Israel's firm stand in its support of the Congress of Palestinian Refugees against the efforts of the Jordanian government, via the British Foreign Office, to deter both Israel and the Congress at the same time. He suggested explaining to the British that Israel would do everything to ensure that the freeing of the blocked accounts would raise the prestige of those who had dared to come into contact with it; that the Congress was the sole organized body of Palestinian refugees and had appeared as such officially at the Lausanne Conference and with Dulles during his visit to Jordan in 1953, and that the ability and honesty of the Congress representatives had been proved; and also to explain that Britain's lack of empathy and support for this first attempt at direct negotiation between Israel and the Arabs would make a bad impression in Israel. (See Rafael to Eytan, telegram 629, 9 November 1954, 130.09/2345/4.)

463. M. Kidron (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 9 November 1954

Coded Tel. 332; Inc.: 130.09/2331/4

Summary

Kidron reports on the agenda of the Security Council debate on the *Bat Galim* affair. It can be assumed that the session will end with a summing up by the Council president who will convey to Burns the opinion of the Council.[1] He is not clear about the situation in the Armistice Commission as a rumour had reached him that Israel had agreed, as demanded by Egypt, to discuss on a daily basis the large number of complaints submitted to the Commission until they reached the *Bat Galim* episode.[2] In his opinion it was the deliberations in the Commission that were important and not the manner in which the episode would be reached.

Notes

1. See No. 456. The Council session which convened on 11 November was brief and ended with a decision that the Council President would write to Burns that it was desirable that the Chairman of the Israel-Egypt Armistice Commission would give priority for a discussion of the *Bat Galim* incident, and that the Commission should do its best to send its report to the Security Council before the end of the month. (See *SCOR, Ninth Year,* 685th Meeting, 1 November1954.)
2. Such an agreement was in fact obtained. The debate on the *Bat Galim* affair was held in the Armistice Commission on 18-19 November – see No. 486.

464. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 9 November 1954

Coded Tel. WIA70; Outg.: 93.01/2210/20

Summary

Eban cables concerning the proposal to send a tanker flying a foreign flag through the Suez Canal. It will be recalled that Azmi had stated that all neutral vessels have free passage.[1] In his opinion, this statement should be tested. The Egyptians would certainly find a pretext for interception in this case as well, but the advantages to Israel would be that the extent of the Egyptian restrictions would once again reveal that they are not limited to Israeli vessels, that another country would be harmed and thus the maritime nations would become united. Israel would thus demonstrate that the blockade was in fact not only the problem of Israeli vessels but also that of oil transportation.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 456.
2. Consultation on this matter see No. 466.

465. M. Kidron (New York) to W. Eytan. 9 November 1954

Coded Tel. X335; Inc.: 130.09/2331/14

Summary

Kidron refers to Eytan's request to explain the meaning of the raising of the issue of Jerusalem by Urrutia, the Colombian representative, in the Security Council debate.[1] This was not done on the instructions of his government and apparently was on his own initiative and his wish to gain prominence. The Arabs seized on this with great glee. Malik, the Lebanese representative, met with Urrutia and requested that he continue to raise this issue in the Assembly, the Security Council or during the debate on the refugees. He also requested that he address the Latin American bloc on the subject. The Arabs are divided among themselves on this matter, with Iraq and Egypt objecting. Among the members of the Latin American bloc there is objection to raising the issue. Argentine, Uruguay and the bloc chairman from Ecuador are not happy about opening up the subject. In the meantime it appears that the Arabs had sent a letter to the secretary-general in which they complain that the ambassadors of the United States and Britain had presented their credentials in Jerusalem.[3]

Notes

1. Eytan requested the reactions of the Israel U.N. Mission members to comments made by Urrutia, the Colombian representative, on the question of Jerusalem, during a Security Council debate on 3 November concerning the detention of the *Bat Galim.* Urrutia referred to press reports regarding the presenting of the credentials of the United States ambassador to Israel in Jerusalem and the protests of the Arabs states, and said that if what had been printed were true, as if a certain power considered Jerusalem as a capital city and decided to establish a diplomatic representation there, this would compel the Latin American states to call for the Council to be convened. (See telegram Y626, 8 November 1954, 130.09/2331/7.)
2. Depauw, a Belgian churchman, the Vatican representative for U.N. affairs.
3. Two days after the sending of this telegram, Kidron added further details: the Arabs were discussing three possibilities for dealing with the issue of Jerusalem within the framework of the U.N.: to include a special item for Jerusalem on the Assembly's agenda; to ask the Conciliation Committee to deal with the matter; to emphasize the matter in the context of the debate on the UNRWA report. (See telegram X337, 11 November 1954, 130.09/2331/14.)

   The heads of the Arab U.N. delegations met on 9 November with the secretary-general and presented a letter to him for distribution among the members of the organization and for the attention of the Conciliation Committee, in which they demanded that all necessary steps be taken in order that the status of Jerusalem as an

international city should not to be affected by the presentation of the credentials of the ambassadors of the United States and Britain to the president of the State of Israel in Jerusalem. (See copy of Justman's telegram to the M.F.A., 10 November 1954, 130.02/2451/5.)

466. Consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem, 10 November 1954)

Report: 130.02/2419/3

Summary

In a consultation that took place in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs chaired by the minister of foreign affairs, two possible methods of dealing with the continued Canal blockade were proposed: to wait for the results of the Security Council debate, or to take further steps by sending a second Israeli vessel or a tanker flying a foreign flag. The majority of the participants were against an attempt to send an additional Israeli vessel but supported the sending of a tanker flying a foreign flag.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 456 and notes.
2. See also No. 481.

467. E. Elath (London) to A. Lourie. 10 November 1954

Coded Tel. 159; Outg.: 93.04/40/17

Summary

Elath presents the main points of his talk with Turton held following the cancellation of his meeting with Eden.[1] Turton explained that Eden's statement was not political but was of practical significance.[2] The statement was intended not only to disperse Israel's apprehensions but also to make the Arabs aware that Britain would not tolerate any aggressive act by them against Israel. Elath replied that Israel appreciated Eden's statement, but it was not clear on the practical implementation in case of emergency and until this aspect is clarified it could not be considered as sufficient guarantee for

its security. A discussion developed on the meaning of the term "aggression". Turton produced the wording of clause 4, point 1 of the SEATO treaty,[3] and in order to clarify the point, stated that only Britain and not Israel could define what constituted a situation of aggression. This is the procedure in their agreement with Jordan, and they were unable to deviate from it. Elath replied that this explanation was not convincing and Israel requested a renewed discussion on this vital issue.

They then went on to discuss Eden's statement about maintaining the balance of arms in the Middle East. Turton said that Eden meant what he had said, that Britain would attempt to maintain equality in accordance with its commitment in the Three Power Declaration, but this did not mean supplying rifle for rifle. He repeated again and again Eden's statement about the Israel Defence Forces' superior military capability. Elath used the opportunity to request that the matter of the sale of Centurion tanks and 25-pounder artillery be speeded up.

At the end of the meeting Turton asked if the rumours were true that Israel intended to send additional vessels through the Canal.[4] Elath replied that he had no information to this effect, but it was Israel's right to send as many vessels as it wished through the Canal in keeping with international law and the Security Council resolution. Turton replied that they did not disagree that it was Israel's legal right to do so, but in reality this could increase tension. Elath answered by quoting some of the provocative statements made by the Arabs recently.

Elath states that when Eden returns he will request a meeting with him in order to clarify the issues.[6]

Notes

1. See No. 461 and n. 3.
2. See No. 454 and n. 1. According to Turton's report on this conversation Elath asked what was Eden's interpretation of the word "action" in paragraph 3 of the Three Power Declaration of 1950, and noted that Shuckburgh had told him (See No. 423) that it signified "consultation". Turton replied that it was possible to attach various meanings to the word, beginning with an appeal to the United Nations and up to armed intervention. He drew Elath's attention to different wordings of an agreement in a treaty signed recently with states in South East Asia (SEATO Treaty, see note 3 below), in which in the event of an armed attack they used the word "action" and in the case of threat – the word "consultation." He explained that according to the terms of the Three Power Declaration the term "action" could be what Britain considered to be necessary in order to prevent border encroachments. Elath replied that he was not satisfied with the explanation and would convey the matter to his government. (See Turton's report on the conversation, 9 November 1954, P.R.O., F.O.371/11076.)

3. The SEATO treaty – South East Asia Collective Defence Treaty, was signed in Manila on 8 September 1954. The signatory states were: the United States, Britain, Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines and Thailand.
4. See No. 455.
5. No. 461.
6. On 10 November, immediately after the ceremony of presenting the credentials of the new British ambassador Nicholls, the embassy counsellor Moore informed Lourie of the British Foreign Office's reaction to Sharett's remarks to Nicholls on this matter in their first meeting (see No. 455). He said that Britain understood that Israel was interested in holding more meetings with Eden in order to clarify more exactly his statement in Parliament, but in their opinion it would not be useful to press the matter at this moment, since such meetings were liable to cause reverberations in the Arab world and the British government was liable to be flooded with requests for similar meetings. Elath presumed that the advice had come under pressure from the Middle East Department in the British Foreign Office which was not happy with Eden's initiative with regard to Israel and was worried about the reactions to this declaration in Arab capitals. Therefore he felt that it would be better to postpone the meeting with Eden for a week or two. (See telegrams from Lourie to the embassy in London, telegram 566, 10 November 1954, 130.09/2320/1; and from Elath to Lourie, telegram 166, 11 November 1954, 93.04/40/17.) See also No. 470.

468. J. Tsur (Paris) to W. Eytan. 10 November 1954

Coded Tel.; Inc.: 130.09/2345/4

Summary

Tsur reports that the members of the French mission who had returned from Egypt had spoken to Nasser.[1] Their impression is that he does not intend to magnify the trial out of proportion, that he is busy with the Moslem Brotherhood affair,[2] and perhaps it will be possible to prevent death penalties if the matter is not given publicity in the press, if there is secret, but firm, American involvement and intercession by the Vatican. Further French involvement would not be helpful since it could give the impression of a "Paris-Tel Aviv axis". Tsur adds that from talks with Goldmann and Blaustein he had gained the impression that the American efforts were still not sufficient.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 452.
2. See No. 459, n. 2.
3. See No. 479.

469. Consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem, 11 November 1954)

Report: 93.04/40/14

Summary

The consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning the release of blocked accounts related to the situation following the agreement Israel had signed with Barclay's Bank and the Congress of Palestine Refugees,[1] and the campaign Jordan had mounted against the Congress.[2] The question under discussion was whether a political complication had been created, and whether contact with the Congress was delaying the implementation of the agreement. At the end of the consultation it was resolved that in the meantime a Note would not be sent to Britain about the issue, but that Gideon Rafael would be sent to London to hold talks with the bank and the Foreign Office to explain that on no account would Israel breach the agreement with the bank. Kol Israel [Israel Radio] would be instructed to create the impression that release of the accounts was being delayed because of the campaign against the Congress.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 386 (Editorial Note), and No. 446.
2. See No. 462 and n. 2.
3. Eytan cabled to Rafael these three conclusions from the consultation, together with the directive to travel to London. To this he added two further instructions: (a) On no account must the agreement with Barclay's be violated or to delay its implementation because of mishaps with the Congress, and (b) everything possible must be done to assist the Congress within the limits of these instructions. Sharett cabled an additional instruction: Israel should not appear to the outside world as an ally of the Congress fighting together against other elements, whereas in reality Israel and the Congress were two different sides. (See Eytan to Rafael, telegram 453, 11 November 1954; Sharett to Rafael No. 455, 12 November 1954, both in 130.09/2345/8.)

470. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to E. Elath (London). 12 November 1954

Coded Tel. 577; Outg.: 130.09/2320/1

Summary

Sharett cables about the Ministerial Committee meeting concerning contacts with Britain and the forthcoming meeting with Eden.[1] The following concerns were expressed in the Committee:

1. There was concern that the granting of a British guarantee would be construed by the British as their having fulfilled all Israeli requests and would serve as a pretext for and justification of a substantial strengthening of the Arabs.

2. There was concern that a British guarantee would be exploited by the Americans as a release from any obligations to Israel.

3. France might consider ties with Britain damaging to its friendship with Israel.

4. Even if it were stated that aid would be forthcoming only if specifically requested, Israel could remain in a situation of one-sided dependence with no possibility of proper and equal status.

Following a lively discussion, a decision was taken according to which Elath would clarify the exact intention of the statement and whether it would be implemented only at Israel's request; he should make it clear that it could not replace the supply of arms for self defence and that the supply should be carried out on an equal basis; it is essential that mutual discussions are held and that any guarantee be given in writing. Furthermore, he should make it clear that Israel wishes to obtain similar undertakings from the other two parties to the Three Power Declaration.

In the meantime he had met with Nicholls again who had recommended that at this stage Israel should be content with the statement as it had been made and should not request further clarification that could embarrass Britain. As for relations with the other two countries, he stated that the United States and France considered Britain to be the Power capable of initiating action in the area on international matters. He undertook to supply further clarifications prior to Sharett's speech in the Knesset.[3,4]

In summary, Elath is instructed that if the meeting with Eden takes place he is to raise all the points referred to above and to consider in the light of Eden's reactions whether to request confirmation without annoying him. If the need arises it would be possible to send a Note after the meeting and in any case the Note would require an official reply.[5]

Notes

1. See No. 461 and n. 3.
2. The reference is to a report which appeared on 10 November from the newspaper's London correspondent G. Lichtheim, regarding a meeting due to take place shortly between Ambassador Elath and Eden, which was intended to comment verbally on Britain's latest Note to Israel. Lichtheim wrote that it could be assumed that Israel would welcome a new British declaration which would give an agreed and binding interpretation to the Three Power Declaration of 1950, and would dispel once and for all the impression that Britain would remain passive or neutral in the event of Arab hostilities against Israel.
3. See No. 476 (Editorial Note).
4. In a letter of 14 November, Nicholls conveyed his government's reply to the question that Sharett had raised in their first meeting with him (see No. 454 and n. 1), that the British government could not imagine a situation in which Britain would come to Israel's aid without it being asked to do so by the Israeli government. (Nicholls's letter to the prime minister, 14 November 1954, 130.02/2412/27.)
5. In reply, Elath referred to some of the assumptions in Sharett's telegram. Regarding paragraph (a) he did not see any basis for Sharett's assumption, since if the British wished to adopt this method of action, they would do so, without any relation to the demand which Israel would make. He considered that first of all they must ask the British for a clear explanation with regard to the implementation of Eden's declaration, without expressing doubt about its sincerity. He did not see a better support for negotiation, and to forego it meant in his opinion not only missing a real opportunity to reinforce Israel's security but also losing an important chance of a further strengthening of relations with Britain at a time when its influence in the international arena was growing increasingly.

   Furthermore, he did not see a basis for the assumption in paragraph (b). On the contrary, it seemed to him that if Israel obtained a British guarantee, it would only serve to advance its cause in the two other capitals.

   Regarding paragraph (c), he agreed that all the questions raised by Sharett required clarification and would serve as a subject for talks with Eden and the Foreign Office, but he saw a point to such a clarification only if Israel took Eden's statement as a starting point for this, for otherwise they would only become embroiled in purposeless hair-splitting with the British which would only harm relations rather than enhance them. (See Elath to Sharett, telegram 160, 16 November 1954, 93.04/40/17.)

   Two days later, based on the conclusions he had drawn from the talks with Ambassador Nicholls and the British Foreign Office, Elath recommended postponing the conversation with Eden until after Shuckburgh's visit in Israel. As he had been informed, he added, Eden intended to wait for Shuckburgh's return and the report he would deliver, before deciding how to proceed. Sharett accepted the recommendation. (See Elath to Sharett, telegram 191, 18 November 1954, 130.09/2320/2; telegram to Elath, No. 609, 19 November 1954, 93.04/40/14.)

471. M. Tov (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 12 November 1954

Notes

1. See No. 465.
2. See ibid, n. 3.
3. The draft resolution presented by Sweden and Holland to the Ad Hoc Political Committee of the fourth U.N. Assembly in December 1949, and presented again after alterations on behalf of Sweden to the Political Committee of the fifth Assembly. In both cases it was not put to the vote at all. Its main points – the application of international supervision over the holy sites in Jerusalem by a commissioner responsible to the U.N. Assembly. (See Vol. 4, Companion Volume, Editorial Note on pp. 251-252, Vol. 5, Companion Volume, Editorial Notes on pp. 218, 240 257-258.)
4. Functional internationalisation was an idea that Israel had raised in the course of the debates in the U.N. Assembly on the future of Jerusalem in 1949-1950, and its main point was the confining of international supervision to the holy sites alone or to the Old City area only. In 1949 the idea was crystallized in a draft resolution which Israel presented to the Assembly, but its motion was not accepted because of the Vatican's opposition. (See Vol. 4, pp. 18-21, and Appendix d, pp. 783-788.)
5. In a telegram to the Israeli missions in the member countries in the General Assembly Committee, Eytan gave instructions to act to prevent the majority needed for the paragraph to be placed on the agenda of the Assembly, and to persuade the countries of the uselessness of a debate in the Assembly plenum on the internationalization of Jerusalem, since there was no chance of gaining the required majority for the motion there. (See Eytan to the Israel missions abroad, 14 November 1954, 130.09/2377/2.) Tov's conversation with the Latin American representatives, see No. 483 and notes.

472. M. Leshem (Rangoon) to D. Lewin. 12 November 1954

Copy: 93.13/226/3

Summary

Leshem refers to the Note from China concerning Israel's vote at the United Nations on the issue of China's admission to the U.N.[1] Even before receiving the Note he had already discussed it with the Chinese ambassador at a social occasion. The ambassador had brought to Leshem's attention Chou En-lai's statement to the effect that Israel was one of the countries with which China was about to establish relations.[2] The ambassador added that they were waiting for action on the part of Israel and reminded him once again about

the visit of the trade delegation. Leshem replied that Israel was waiting for the arrival of the Minister David Hacohen, who was to head the delegation.[3]

Notes

1. In a Note of 8 November, the Chinese ambassador in Rangoon, Yao Chung-Ming, informed the chargé d'affaires Leshem of the official response of the Chinese government to the explanation Leshem had given him concerning Israel's vote in the U.N. (See No. 458). The decisive sentence in the Note was: "In taking into account the declaration of the spokesman of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the explanation given by Leshem in his government's name, the People's Republic of China's government is sure that it may be expected that the Government of Israel, from the standpoint of the establishing and maintaining of normal relations with China, will from now on adopt a just attitude towards China on the question of the restoration of the legitimate rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations. (The original and translation of the Note, in File 93.13/226/3.)
2. Leshem reported this mention of Israel in Chou en Lai's speech in his letter to the Asia Division (1 October 1954, 93.13/226/3.)
3. On the delegation to China – see No. 371. The director of the Asia Division, Lewin, who at the end of October renewed the discussion with the minister of foreign affairs and the director-general about organizing the delegation's visit, suggested that it should leave in the second half of December, in order to take advantage of the favourable atmosphere currently prevailing in China towards Israel. He asserted that the aim of the delegation was not to sign a trade agreement, but only to hold preliminary talks in the commercial sphere, and other areas as well, with the intention that following these talks Israel would invite a reciprocal delegation in order to finalize in a more official manner a trade and political agreement. On 9 November, Sharett once more raised the matter in the ministerial committee. This time not only was there no opposition, but they enthusiastically endorsed the proposal. On 16 November Leshem visited the Chinese ambassador and informed him that the delegation would leave between 15 December and 15 January, but the Chinese reacted without too much enthusiasm, and only asked for details about the delegation members. These details were handed to him in a letter on 29 November. (This correspondence and further details in File 93.13/226/3; Lewin's letter to Linton, 15 November 1954, 130.14/2561/7.)

473. Israel Embassy in Washington to the United States Division. 12 November 1954

Coded Tel. WIA87; Outg.: 93.01/2210/22

Summary

The Embassy reports on the meeting of Shiloah and Shimoni with Barnes concerning the memorandum delivered by White[1] about the matter of waters. He repeated all seven points of the memorandum, saying that they had presumed that it was obvious to Israel that the purpose of the survey was to examine the technical possibility of using Lake Tiberias as a reservoir. At the same time he understood that Israel's agreement to the survey did not necessarily mean that it agreed to its implementation. They would of course continue to exert pressure on Israel on this matter because without the use of Lake Tiberias there was no point to the entire project.

It appears, therefore, that the meeting with Barnes did not lead to any progress. Furthermore, they found difficulty in replying to Barnes' question about what type of survey Israel would be prepared to agree to, because they had not received instructions from Israel. In the meantime, they request that no reply be sent to White's memorandum until agreement on technical matters has been reached.[3]

Notes

1. In this telegram, Herzog reported on the memorandum submitted by White, the counsellor at the United States embassy, on 10 November, in the presence of Criddle. It contained the agreement to Israel's proposal to contact a local company to conduct the survey and to limit to two the number of experts from the United States. The memorandum also contained seven paragraphs detailing the main points of the survey which in Israel's view, went far beyond what the Department of State had initially asked for, and indicated its intention to use the data obtained for the development of a general plan to use Lake Tiberias to store the Yarmuk River waters – an intention which Israel vigorously opposed. In a conversation held at the time of the submission of the memorandum, Herzog protested the deviation and stressed that the promise to recommend to the ministers to respond positively had been given in the context of a reduced request that Johnston had made at a meeting with Eban and Shiloah on 17 September. (See the United States Division to the embassy in Washington, IW48, 11 November 1954, 130.09/2310/8; memorandum from White, 130.02/3694/9.)
2. On 12 November, Herzog again met with White and Criddle and informed them of Israel's conclusions following a consultation that had taken place that same morning with the participation of Sharett, Eshkol and the Israel Water Planning company (T.H.L.) representatives. The main conclusions were that Israel was opposed to the

use of Lake Tiberias as a reservoir for the Yarmuk River waters in the near future; as for the use of Lake Tiberias at an unspecified time in the future about which Johnston had spoken, for that there was no need for a survey of the proportions called for in the memorandum that White had submitted. The implementation of this would take a long time and could arouse a public debate in Israel which would harm Johnston's next mission. In reply, Criddle indicated five points in the survey acceptable to Israel and on this he had received the approval of Herzog and Wiener, who advised that the survey be conducted by an American engineer who was already in Israel, Criddle for example, or two engineers from the American Foreign Operations Administration delegation, and thereby prevent a public debate. White and Criddle promised to cable the proposal to their superiors in the United States. (See the United States Division to the Israel embassy in Washington, IW50, 12 November 1954, 130.09/2310/8.) This telegram apparently reached the embassy after the telegram presented here had been sent.

3. On the same day, Barnes informed the embassy that the Department of State could not retract White's memorandum, but would instruct him to add to the memorandum a reservation saying that both the Department of State and Johnston were completely aware of Israel's reservations with regard to Lake Tiberias and wished to assure it that their request did not constitute a threat to Israel's position regarding Lake Tiberias. In addition, they instructed White to remove the whole matter from its political context and to transfer it to the water experts, Criddle and Wiener. (See the Israel embassy in Washington, WIA91, 12 November 1954, 130.09/2310/12.) On November 13, White informed Herzog that the Department of State had decided to adopt Israel's suggestion concerning the content of the survey and the way it should be conducted. (See Herzog to the embassy in Washington, IW80, 19 November 1954, 130.09/2310/8.)

474. E. Ben-Horin (Ankara) to the Director of the West European Division. 14 November 1954

Orig.: 130.10/2536/13

Summary

Ben-Horin analyses his meeting with Birgi which dealt with relations in general between Israel and Turkey.[1] It seemed to him that the Turks too were not sure exactly where the process of improving relations with the Arabs, begun recently, was leading. There was a chance that within a short time a series of agreements would be made with the Arabs, whether mutual agreements or a broader agreement including more than one Arab country. In order to maintain this process Turkey would need a certain relaxation in and playing down its relations with Israel. Ben-Horin's conclusion is that ties with Turkey will be reduced in the future, perhaps to trade links only. In any event, it will not be possible to take advantage of Turkey's position on

political issues or as a factor to exert pressure on the Arab countries to come to an arrangement with Israel. In order to counteract this trend, Ben-Horin makes a number of suggestions: to take action in the major capital cities; in the United States concern should be expressed and criticism voiced that the policy being followed by their government concerning Turkey is harming Israel; in France (which had expressed its discontent with recent developments forcing it out of the Middle East), this should be in the direction of joint efforts to strengthen Turkish-Israel relations. Action should also be taken in Israel through a meeting between the prime minister and the Turkish chargé d'affaires, as well as the expression of open criticism. In Turkey, public opinion should be aroused, despite the difficulties in taking such action in that country.

To sum up: he does not hold out high hopes for results from these actions, but constant discreet pressure should be exerted on the Turkish government to continue to create permanent facts concerning relations between the two countries.

Notes

1. The full report of this meeting is on file, but not printed here. The meeting with Birgi, the Secretary-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, took place at Ben-Horin's request. He expressed appreciation for the assurances that Turkey would not develop its new relations with the Arab States at the expense of its friendship with Israel, but complained about the fact that the Turks did not make public its relations with Israel in their recent political declarations, in which the Arabs had been highly praised. Ben-Horin was referring to the speech by the Turkish President Bayar at the National Assembly on 2 November in which he praised Egypt for its agreement to allow the British to operate the base in the Suez Canal area in the event of an attack on Turkey. Birgi replied that there was no change for the worse in the friendly relations between Turkey and Israel, but because of the Soviet threat on the one hand and the Arab-Israel conflict on the other, they had chosen to base their defence on an alliance with the Arab states. At the same time they had made it abundantly clear to the Arabs that they do not intend to join any anti-Israeli front. Turkey had to beware of unnecessary obstacles in the path of the burgeoning Turkish-Arab understanding and therefore it had to avoid making declarations of friendship for Israel, which were liable to be interpreted by the Arabs as provocation. Therefore, all the actions taken by Turkey in the sphere of cultural relations, encouraging trade relations and the forging of closer military ties will be carried out without publicity and without diplomatic delegations. With regard to raising the level of the missions from legations to embassies, he replied that this would have to wait until the Turkish representations in those states in the Middle East in which there were still legations were raised. (See minutes of meeting with Birgi, 11 November 1954, 130.10/2536/13.)

475. J. Tsur (Paris) to the West European Division. 14 November 1954

Coded Tel.; incoming: 130.02/2345/4

Summary

Tsur reports on his meeting with Maillard who expressed satisfaction with the improvement of relations between France and Israel, asking about the cause of France's popularity in Israel. Tsur explained that the reason was that France had not followed the American administration's new policy. Maillard replied that this had been the line of his department throughout the past year, a line unaltered by the change in government. He asked if there were any clandestine negotiations being held between Israel and Egypt or other Arab bodies. Tsur denied this and Maillard requested that if such a process were to start France be informed as soon as possible, so as not be faced with a fait accompli. He raised the problem of immigration from North Africa, stating that France's interests would be adversely affected by large-scale immigration.[1] He mentioned the Arab contention that immigration strengthens Israel. Tsur explained Israel's stand, and stressed that North African Jewry should not become a bargaining counter that would endanger its security.

Notes

1. On the state of the Jewish communities in North Africa and the immigration from there – see Nos. 259 and 335. In 1954 there was a marked increase in immigration from Morocco – about 10,000 immigrants. In the following year about 27,000 immigrants immigrated to Israel. (See documentation in File 130.10/2525/9.)

476. Editorial Note

Statement by the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Knesset on Israel's Foreign Policy

On 15 November, the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Moshe Sharett, issued a statement in the Knesset on Israel's foreign policy. Sharett opened with remarks on the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement which had been signed on 19 October and assessed its significance in relation to Israel's

security. He said that with the completion of the evacuation process and the handing over of the base in the Suez Canal region, Egypt would gain an invaluable geopolitical and strategic position of power which would increase its potential for aggression against Israel, particularly since the Agreement did not contain any undertaking on Egypt's part to refrain from attacking Israel. Sharett expressed appreciation for the public declaration by Britain, in a letter which Foreign Minister Eden had sent to Ambassador Elath on the day of the signing of the Agreement and made public (See No. 425), that it attached great importance to friendly relations with Israel and was ready to do everything in its power to help resolve the conflict between the parties; and also with regard to the statement by Eden in Parliament on 2 November (See No. 454, n. 1) which was the first attempt to state clearly in public Britain's undertaking according to the Three Power Declaration of 1950 to come to Israel's assistance if it were attacked, and to preserve the balance between Israel and all the Arab states in the supply of arms to the two parties. At the same time, Sharett noted, the declaration did not offer compensation or rectification for Israel's unequal status in the Middle East, which was excluded from the dense network of alliances that had been formed there, and therefore Israel had the right to demand military assistance and to demand improved conditions for purchasing arms.

In relations with the United States, Israel still expected the declarations of its leaders to be translated into actions, but at this moment it had no information regarding a substantial change in the U.S. policy towards the Middle East, a policy that tended towards the unilateral arming of the Arab states.

Sharett expressed satisfaction at the friendly relations with France and the cooperation existing with it in important areas, especially in atomic research for peaceful uses. He also noted the improvement in political and commercial relations with various states and announced the dispatching of the trade delegation to China.

With regard to relations with the Arabs, Sharett dwelt upon the sequence of rioting and murders along the Egyptian border and warned Egypt against wrongly interpreting Israel's restraint in the light of the continuous provocation. He also mentioned Israel's attempts to implement the right of passage in the Suez Canal. He said that Israel considered that the framework of armistice agreements was a transient stage and the lesser of two evils, but in the absence of peace the government would remain committed to faithful fulfilment on its part, on the part of the Arab states and on the part of the U.N. personnel. At the same time he repeated Israel's readiness to progress towards peace or to make treaties of non-aggression with its

neighbours, an issue which had also been given expression in Eban's speech at the U.N. Assembly. (See *Divrei HaKnesset,* (Knesset Reports), Fourth Session of the Second Knesset, Vol. XVII, pp. 64-67 [Hebrew]).

477. H. E. Stassen (Washington) to A. Eban (Washington). 15 November 1954

Notes

1. This statement was preceded by a difference of opinion between the Foreign Operations Administration, which advocated allocating 40 million dollars to Israel, and the Department of State which stated that 30 million was sufficient. It was not clear to Israel whether this was the final amount, or if it had been decided in the meantime to allocate that sum about which there was no dispute. At all events, Eban was asked to obtain an assurance from the Department of State for the higher amount. (See Sherman's letter to Sapir, 12 November 1954, 130.20/2486/4.)
2. See Vol. 8, No. 537 (Editorial Note)
3. Eban and Sharett differed concerning the significance of this grant. Sharett cabled that he was not surprised by the amount of 40 million dollars; whereas Eban saw an achievement in that it was in addition to the 180 million dollars that had already been allocated in previous years, and that it was given at a time of reductions in foreign aid. (See Sharett to Eban, IW61, 15 November 1954, 130.09/2310/8; Eban to Sharett, WIA108, 16 November 1954, 93.01/2210/22.) See also No. 522.

478. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 16 November 1956

Notes

1. In this telegram, Eban quoted from Dulles's letter to him (see No. 443 and n. 4) and added that his inclination was to wait a little longer, unless the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was certain that this was the time to request a meeting with Dulles in order to ask him specifically about his attitude to Eden's interpretation of the Three Power Declaration of 1950. (See Eban to the United States Division, WIA99, 16 November 1954, 93.01/2210/22.)
2. This draft, dated 16 November in File 130.02/2456/16. See also No. 497 and n. 2.
3. The meeting with Byroade, at which Shiloah was present and was described as "private", took place on 10 November. Byroade reported that he was about to leave his post and to be appointed ambassador in Cairo. He stressed that Dulles was deeply engaged in the Israeli matter and was devoting time to it "and one could not imagine a secretary of state more sympathetic than Dulles and more striving to solve

Israel's problems in a way that would satisfy it". However, he added, the difficulty was to find a security guarantee formula that would be acceptable to congress, and he himself had held many conversations to this end with congressmen, but so far he had drawn a blank. Shiloah commented on this in a report he sent on the meeting that he and Eban were doubtful about the truth of his remarks, because if there really had been such talks some news of this would have reached them. Byroade also referred to Eden's statement, and said that there was no doubt that the Administration saw itself as committed to come to Israel's assistance if attacked, but the existing constitutional situation did not permit him to make such a declaration without the consent of Congress. (See Shiloah to the United States Division, WIA84, 11 November 1954, 93.01/2210/22.)

479. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 16 November 1954

Coded Tel. IW67; Outg.: 130.09/2310/8

Summary

Eytan cables concerning the trial of the espionage and sabotage network in Egypt.[1] From the latest reports and Rafael's report on his recent visit to Paris, it appears that there is some possibility that the Egyptians would not take an extreme position. Every effort must be made to strengthen this approach by actions that would make Egypt aware of the public protest that would be raised in the United States and the West if death sentences were imposed. He requests that Eban take immediate action and organize the sending of an American personality to meet with Nasser, perhaps Arthur Dean. He should also request that Blaustein carry out his promise to call for Byroade's intervention.[3]

Notes

1. See No. 468.
2. The suggestion to send Dean to talk with Nasser did not appeal to Eban or Shiloah for several reasons. (See Shiloah to Eytan, WIA121, 18 November 1954, 93.01/2210/20.) The identification of "G.B.S." with Bedell Smith is presumed but no details of a consultation with Bedell Smith on this affair were traced.
3. See No. 459.

480. West European Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Ambassador in Washington. 16 November 1954

Coded Tel. IW64; Outg.: 130.09/2310/8

Summary

Further to the telegram about a possible meeting of Tsur with Mendès France,[1] the Division raises points for discussion in the event that it would take place.

After highly praising France's policy and support of Israel at a time when international opinion is against Israel, he should raise issues concerning the region. He should describe Israel's isolation, condemn the arming of the Arab states and ask his opinion about the defence of the region and how to guarantee Israel's involvement in this process. He should express Israel's readiness to cooperate with France in the region. He should request France's support at the Three Power Commission for maintaining equality of armament by supplying arms in effective quantities, without allowing other considerations, such as Israel's technological effectiveness or the moral aspect to affect the quantitative aspect. He should explain the financial burden on Israel arising from the purchase of arms and request France to show consideration by granting credit on suitable terms. He should draw to his attention the increasing number of immigrants from North Africa that requires them to appeal to world Jewry in terms that are not always under the government's control. Israel would make every effort to prevent this publicity from harming France.[4]

Notes

1. In this telegram, Eytan reported, via Tsur in Paris, on Mendès France's intention during his forthcoming visit to the United States to talk with the Americans about the Middle East situation. In their view, Tsur concluded, the French did not believe that any benefit would accrue from the attempt to organize and arm the Arab states, and lately they had been concerned by the Turkish initiative to create a bloc of Arab states. They were of the opinion that before such an initiative was begun a permanent peace in the region must be achieved and freedom of navigation in the Canal assured. (See Eytan to the Israel embassy in Washington, 15 November 1954, 130.09/2312/8.)
2. On the chief of staff's visit to France see No. 311.
3. See No. 454, n. 1.
4. On Eban's conversation with Mendès France see No. 493.

481. I. Kosloff (London) to L. Eshkol, P. Sapir and W. Eytan. 16 October 1954

Coded Tel. 182; Inc.: 130.09/2320/2

Summary

Kosloff reports on the Anglo Iranian Oil Company's statement that it prefers that Israel purchase its first consignment of Persian oil directly through the Delek company, if possible with the funds of the American Grant-in-Aid. Shiloah is making contacts in the United States in this direction, and if it becomes clear that it is possible, oil should be transported immediately via the Cape.[1] If the chances appear to be slight, then they should return to the British and bring pressure to bear on them to attempt to carry out the transaction themselves.

Notes

1. Sharett consulted with colleagues in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the matter of transporting Iranian oil. Most of them felt that it was preferable above all to ensure the purchase of the Iranian oil itself, in the light of Arab pressure on Iran, and not necessarily to use it just now in order to put the freedom of passage through the Suez Canal to the test. (See notes in File 130.02/2420/2.)
2. In these telegrams Kosloff reported the wish of the Anglo-Iranian Company that the Iranian fuel destined for Israel should be purchased directly by the Delek company, and instructed Shiloah and Sherman to examine the possibility of purchasing fuel for Israel through a broker, whether it be a British broker or American fuel companies. (See telegrams Nos. EWA72, EWA73, 16 November 1954, 93.01/2210/22.) On the affair of the oil purchase from Iran see U. Bialer, "Fuel from Iran", *Iyunim*, 8, 1998, pp. 162-165 [Hebrew].

482. Major-General E.L.M. Burns (Jerusalem) to Rav Aluf M. Dayan (Tel Aviv). 17 November 1954

Notes

1. This refers to an exchange of letters concerning the return of the deportees of the Azazmeh tribe and the Arabs of Majdal (on the deportation affair see No. 245 and n. 2) In the letter of 6 October Burns wrote to Dayan that, after Israel had retracted on 4 October the appeals it had presented to the special committee on this affair (see ibid, n. 3), he proposed establishing an ad hoc committee to deal with procedural matters with regard to those entitled to return, and also to recommend steps for

supervision, in a mutual agreement on the cross-border movement of the nomadic Arabs. This exchange of letters is in File 130.02/2436/7.

2. Dayan replied to the above letter that if the Egyptians desired it Israel would be prepared to participate in an unofficial exploratory meeting in which they would exchange ideas on the subjects that Burns had raised in his letter.(The letter, dated 29 November, in File 130.02/2436/7.)

483. M. Tov (New York) to W. Eytan. 17 November 1954

Notes

1. Tov reported in a telegram that after his 16 November meeting with the representatives of the entire Latin American bloc, the bloc chairman Trujillo, the Ecuadorian representative, told him that in his view there was now no chance for the Colombian initiative to bring up the Jerusalem issue in the U.N. (Tov to the M.F.A., 16 November 1954, 130.09/2331/14.) On the initiative of Urrutia – see Nos. 445, 472.
2. In a further meeting with Urrutia, on 22 November, the latter promised that as a result of Tov's meeting with the representatives of the Latin American states, there was at the moment no chance that they would support his initiative, and that for the moment he would refrain from raising the subject of Jerusalem in the Assembly, although he would always be prepared to bring it up when he had sufficient support. (See Tov to Eytan, X391, 22 November 1954, 130.09/2331/14.) On this Sharett reacted briefly in a telegram to Tov: "Blessed be the True Judge, and well done in the role of burial society." (Telegram 686, 24 November 1954, 130.09/2331/7.)

484. A. Eban (Washington) to the U.S. Secretary of state (Washington). 18 November 1954

Notes

1. See No. 443 and n. 4.
2. See No. 454, n. 1.

485. M. Gazit (London) to the Asia Division and the Economic Division. 18 November 1954

Coded Tel. 198; Outg.: 93.04/39/12

Summary

Gazit reports on the meeting with the Iranian second secretary in London. In the course of the conversation he threw out the idea of purchase of oil directly from Iran.[1] The secretary stressed that their policy was to sell oil to everyone, and it was his impression that they would not refuse to sell oil to Israel. It was not the Arab states they feared but the religious extremists in their country. He offered to examine the possibility for Israel. Gazit replied that he would put the proposal to his superiors in Israel. Gazit adds that Kosloff believes that oil should be included among the goods for barter in the trade agreement between the two countries.[2] He asks for information on the steps being taken by Israel in this connection.

Notes

1. See No. 481. In the course of the meeting, Sanandaji expressed regret that full diplomatic relations did not exist between Iran and Israel, requested that Israel should consider its relations with Iran as normal and very good, and asked that the closing of the Iranian representation in Israel should not be interpreted as signifying that the Iranians did not wish for the relations to continue. He noted that the economies of Iran and Israel complemented each other and that there were other very important common interests, such as their mutual opposition to the union of Iraq with one of the Arab states. (Report of the meeting, 18 November 1954, 130.15/2566/1.)
2. See No. 16 and n. 3 there.

486. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 19 November 1954

Coded Tel.; Outg.: 130.09/2320/1

Summary

Tekoah reports on deliberations in the Israel-Egypt Mixed Armistice Commission regarding the *Bat Galim*[1] episode. At the end of a difficult debate, the resolution proposed by Israel was passed, according to which the

Egyptian complaint was unfounded and that Israel had violated no clause in the Armistice Agreement. After the vote was taken, the chairman called upon both parties to arrange for the speedy release of the *Bat Galim* and its crew.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 463 and notes. On the debate and wording of the resolution, see the report of the chief of staff of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization from 25 November 1954, 130.02/2438/6.
2. Article II, section 2, of the Israel-Egypt Armistice Agreement states that no element of the land, sea or air military or para-military forces of either party, including non-regular forces, shall commit any warlike or hostile act against the military or para-military forces of the other party, or against civilians in territory under the control of that party; or shall advance beyond or pass over for any purpose whatsoever the Armistice Demarcation Line set forth in Article VI of this agreement... and shall not violate the international frontier; or enter into or pass through the air space of the other party or through the waters within three miles of the coastline of the other party. (See Vol. 3, appendix F, p. 689.)
3. This agreement, which was signed between Israel and Egypt on 23 July 1953, stipulated that non-military vessels of either party which were forced by circumstances to seek refuge in the territorial waters of the other side, should be granted shelter therein and should be permitted afterwards to continue on their way as soon as possible. (See Vol. 8, No. 310, Editorial Note). The Egyptian representative maintained that this agreement implied that it was forbidden to enter the territorial waters of the opposing party, except in the case of force majeure, whereas the Israeli representative replied that this agreement had nothing to do with the armistice agreements, and consequently the Armistice Commission did not have the right to discuss it.
4. The following day, 20 November, the Egyptian minister of foreign affairs announced that, despite the call of the Commission chairman, the ship and its crew would not be released. He also announced that he was entering an appeal. That same evening Tekoah spoke with Burns who agreed to send to the Security Council a report on the Commission's decision, without waiting for developments regarding the appeal. (See Tekoah to the Israel missions abroad, 21 November 1954, 130.09/2320/1.) See also No. 505.

487. United States Division (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 19 November 1954

Coded Tel. IW81; Inc.: 130.09/2310/8

Summary

The Division relates to Eban's cable concerning the use of Lake Tiberias as a general reservoir.[1] It should be clear that the plan to collect waters in Lake Tiberias is a definitive regression from the position taken by Johnston at the conclusion of the negotiations in Israel. At first, Johnston based his proposal on the financial saving involved but now his aides have agreed that there is no financial saving in the other solution. Despite the claims of Johnston and his aides, there is a definite connection between the survey and the negotiations to take place on their final proposal, since this creates a psychological fait accompli. Israel was right in standing its ground. The suspicion among the public of the entire project must be taken into account and turning Lake Tiberias into a reservoir would make it difficult to accept the entire plan. Finally, despite the continuing discussions, Israel has not received from Johnston a clear statement to the effect that he does not intend to propose international control but rather the appointment of a water master with limited powers.

In the meantime, Wiener is preparing an opinion on the engineering aspect that would make it clear that Lake Tiberias was not required as a reservoir and he would speak to Criddle about it.[3]

Notes

1. In this telegram Eban expressed reservations about Israel's inflexible opposition to the survey which aimed to explore the engineering potential for the use of Lake Tiberias as a central water reservoir (See No. 473). Firstly, this was an old American demand and basis of all their plans: secondly, Israel's reservation about the storage in Lake Tiberias should not deny the Americans the possibility of gathering information designed to help them to continue the discussion with the parties; thirdly, to the heart of the matter, there might possibly be room for a school of thought which considered positively the possibility of storing water precisely in Israeli territory. But even if Israel would not budge from its position, it would have to engineer a crisis only in the event of the adoption of the plan itself and not on account of the survey. Therefore Eban recommended allowing the survey together with an exchange of letters in which Israel would express its reservation about the storage in Lake Tiberias and the Americans would reply that they understood this reservation, and allowing the survey would not be interpreted as Israeli

acquiescence to the storage plan. (Eban to the United States Division, 16 November 1954, 93.01/2110/22.)

2. See No. 324.
3. In a follow-up telegram J. Herzog warned that by the use of Lake Tiberias as a water reservoir the Yarmuk River waters would in fact be under Israel's control, but it would be difficult to conceive that in such a case the Arabs would be satisfied with a restricted water-master, and if Israel did not make Johnston aware of its position in good time, it was possible that it would be accused of causing the breakdown of the negotiations on the issue of Lake Tiberias by pointing to its refusal for international supervision of the area. Furthermore, he expressed the fear that the demand for border changes around Lake Tiberias would be raised. (United States Division to the Israel embassy in Washington, IW92, 21 November 1954, 130,09/2310/8.)

488. A. Eban (New York) to M. Sharett. 19 November 1954

Coded Tel. 385; Inc.: 130.09/2331/14

Summary

Eban reports on the forthcoming debate on the issue of Arab refugees.[1] The three proposers of the resolution are wavering and have not yet reached agreement. The danger is that they will include a comment on the report of the advisory commission which refers to the lack of success on the issues of compensation and repatriation, but even worse is the attitude towards Israel arising out of expectations that there would be some progress on compensation. The Netherlands representative told Comay that the Scandinavian delegations and his own delegation were convinced that this indifference on the part of Israel and its lack of initiative are not warranted and they are awaiting a voluntary act on the part of Israel allowing partial repatriation, but if this were not possible, at least something in the area of compensation. Those who are aware of the setting up of the Horowitz committee[2] and its conclusions are most disappointed to hear that so far there had been no progress. The delegation is convinced that Comay should be instructed to make a statement that would ease the atmosphere, such as an undertaking that Israel would announce a first payment to a special fund to be used to pay compensation, and would be prepared to discuss with U.N. representatives the method of action to be taken. He requests a cabled reply as to whether there was any possibility of such a proposal.[3]

Notes

1. On 16 November, the Ad Hoc Political Committee of the Ninth Session of the U.N. General Assembly began the debate on the annual UNRWA report on Palestinian refugees. Before the committee were the report of the director of the Agency and the joint report of the director and the advisory commission of the Agency (U.N. Documents A2717 and A2717/add.1). In his report the Agency director noted that the aim of the program that had been approved by the U.N. Assembly at its sixth session had been the gradual reduction of the welfare expenses until their final elimination by means of rehabilitation programs. Among the obstacles in the way to implementing this aim he pointed to the absence of a solution in accordance with the Assembly resolutions regarding repatriation and compensation, the negative attitude of the refugees and the lack of cooperation on the part of the Arab states. The joint report laid greater stress on Israel's responsibility in not budging from its position that the refugees must not return, nor had it undertaken any positive action regarding settling of the compensation issue. The report recommended that the UNRWA agency should continue to cooperate very closely with the Conciliation Commission regarding these issues, that efforts should be made to persuade the refugees that cooperation with the Agency plans would not adversely affect their rights to return and compensation; that the negotiations with the states hosting the refugees continue, that they should gradually take on themselves the responsibility for welfare, and that the mandate of the Agency be extended for a further five years.
2. The reference is to the committee set up to clarify the question of the Arab refugees headed by D. Horowitz, which the government had decided to establish in June 1953, in a decision that was not officially made public. In the report it submitted in December 1953 the committee came to the conclusion that the refugee issue was perhaps the central issue from the political and security standpoint, and its resolution was the path to a permanent peace. The committee recommended a program for the settling of refugees in Arab states, and estimated their number at 700,000 and the expense for their rehabilitation at around 300-350 million dollars. The committee recommended obtaining this sum through a grant from the United States whose repayment would be guaranteed by the German reparations payments. (The Committee Report, December 1953, in File 130.15/3743/10.)
3. Sharett instructed the Israel mission to the U.N. not to publicly mention the Horowitz Committee report, which was an internal government matter and not subject for negotiation with outside elements. On the other hand, he authorized them to state that if the Arabs would cease the blockade and boycott, Israel would be prepared to begin implementing the compensation payments plan. This condition must be explained by the fact that the demand for Israel to pay compensation could not be contemplated as long as the boycott continued, since it was causing Israel substantial financial losses. They could also add that there was a big concession on Israel's part in not making the implementation conditional on first signing a peace agreement. (See Sharett to the Israel mission to the U.N., telegram 685, 22 November 1954, 130.09/2331/7.)

   Comay spoke in the Ad Hoc committee of the U.N. Assembly on 26 November. In accordance with Sharett's instructions he repeated Israel's readiness to enter into discussions on compensation with any appropriate U.N. institution, but noted that two main difficulties had to be overcome: funding and the economic siege

conducted by the Arab states against Israel, which in the six years of the State of Israel's existence had caused a loss of not less than the value of the abandoned Arab property. At the same time, despite its attempts to contribute to the resolution of the refugee problem – about 50,000 of them would be settled by reintegration in Israel, and some would be allowed to return in the framework of family reunions – there was no chance that Israel would let more refugees into its territory and the final resolution of the problem lay in the permanent resettlement of the refugees in Arab lands. (See *GAOR, 9th Session, Ad Hoc Political Committee*, 35th meeting, 26 November 1954.)

489. R. Shiloah (Washington) to G. Rafael and J. Herzog. 21 November 1954

Coded Tel. WIA130; Inc.: 93.01/2210/22

Summary

Shiloah reports on Blaustein's meeting with Byroade in which two topics were raised: the prisoners in Egypt and negotiations between Israel and Dulles concerning the publication of a policy declaration.

Blaustein requested American intervention on behalf of the prisoners in Egypt[1] and stressed Israel's leniency when dealing with Egyptians and Arabs taken prisoner, despite clear proof of their guilt. He warned that if the Egyptians acted with extreme measures this would lead to a serious crisis in relations between Israel and Egypt and between American Jewry and the Egyptians. Byroade promised to take immediate action in Washington and Cairo, and to inform Blaustein of the results. It would seem that he was reluctant to cause a serious crisis with the Egyptians while taking his first steps in Cairo. Blaustein will be meeting with Riad and would resolutely raise the matter of the prisoners. Shiloah gave Blaustein directives for the meeting.

As for negotiations with Dulles, Byroade stated that no important developments could be expected in the near future. Dulles is examining the situation, with the aid of the staff of the Department of State's Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs. It may well be that with the inauguration of the new Congress ways will be found to obtain its agreement to an official definition of the Three Power Declaration, in the spirit of Eden's statement concerning the obligation to come to Israel's aid if attacked.[5]

Shiloah says that this meeting raised many problems and concerns and they would devote the coming week to clarifications.

Notes

1. See Nos. 459, 479.
2. This apparently refers to the attempt by Marcelle (Victorinne) Ninio, one of the 13 arrested, to commit suicide by jumping from her detention cell.
3. In this statement, Rabbi Nahum denied reports about punitive steps against Egyptian Jews, including the arrest of over one hundred and fifty Jews in the liberal professions, industrialists and officials. According to him there was no racist terror against the Jewish community in Egypt. On the contrary, since the new regime had come to power the authorities had on various occasions displayed their warm feelings towards Egyptian Jewry. Although it was true that there had been arrests, after interrogation the people had been set free and there only remained 13 persons who were now being brought before a military tribunal. (The full text of the statement in File 130.02/2453/21.) See also No. 510.
4. Blaustein did in fact meet Riad who was at that time in the United States as a member of the Egyptian delegation to the U.N. Assembly session. On the subject of the prisoners, Riad denied that Israel behaved mercifully with Egyptian and Arab prisoners. On humanitarian grounds, and in order to create a calm atmosphere in the region, and out of consideration for the United States he promised to make every effort to prevent the application of the rigour of the law both during the interrogation and with regard to the verdict, and added that he also knew that his superiors were treating the matter with magnanimity. As to the meeting with Nasser, Riad reiterated his apology for its cancellation, and repeated the invitation for a visit in the near future.

   Blaustein also received a message from Byroade informing him that following his instructions Ambassador Caffrey had appealed to the Egyptian government concerning the prisoners and was convinced that they were being fairly treated, and that they would continue to treat them thus during the remainder of the interrogation and also with regard to the sentences. Caffrey maintained that Rabbi Nahum's statement about the fair treatment of the Jews was confirmed also by other Jewish leaders in Egypt. Byroade promised Blaustein that Caffrey would continue to follow closely the matter of the prisoners, and they would also act through the Egyptian embassy in Washington. (See Shiloah to Rafael and Herzog, WIA137, 24 November 1954, 93.01/2210/22.)
5. Herzog's comments on this matter see No. 491.

490. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Missions Abroad. 22 November 1954

Coded Tel. Outg.: 130.09/2310/8

Summary

Tekoah reports that Israel had received the wording of the Egyptian appeal.[1,2] The appeal is only against the Israeli resolution that was passed and not against the rejection of the resolution proposed by the Egyptians.

The appeal does not refer to the decision in principle included in the resolution that Israel had not violated any clause in the Armistice Agreement, and thus the passage of Israeli vessels through the territorial waters of the Suez Canal is in keeping with the agreement. The form of the appeal will facilitate debate in the Security Council, without having to wait for the conclusion of deliberations in the Special Committee. The meaning of the appeal is that the decision regarding the shots fired is final, in keeping with the prohibition of appealing on facts, and the principle of legality of passage through territorial waters also remains intact in accordance with the Mixed Armistice Commission's resolution, since the Egyptians had not appealed against it.

Notes

1. See No. 486 and notes there.
2. The wording of the appeal see in the report of the Chief of Staff of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization, 25 November 1954, File 130.02/2438/6.
3. In fact on the same day Rafael instructed Eban to demand the continuation of the debate in the Security Council based on the decision of the Armistice Commission, whilst stressing the fact that during the discussion in the commission Egypt had itself retracted the claim that shots were fired, and the appeal it had lodged did not refer to shots but to the essence of the problem of the blockade, which the Armistice Commission was not authorized to discuss. (See Rafael to Eban, 22 November 1954, 130.09/2339/1.)

   The Egyptian appeal was discussed at a Special Committee on 25 November. It was decided, without an official vote and without the opposition of the parties, that they should skip the words "that the Commission finds the Egyptian complaint to be unfounded" and that it was not the intention of this resolution (of the Special Committee) to judge the facts in the case or to overturn the decisions of the Armistice Commission in their regard. Tekoah interpreted the decision as rejection of the Egyptian appeal; the instruction to correct referred to the wording only and the decision of the Armistice Commission remained in force both with regard to the facts as well as the principle that the *Bat Galim* had not violated the Armistice Agreement in its voyage, and it was finally made clear that the principle of free passage was not limited by the agreement and applied also to Israeli ships. (See telegrams from Tekoah to the Israel missions, 25-26 November 1954, 130.09/2312/8.) See also No. 505.

491. United States Division[1] (Jerusalem) to A. Eban and R. Shiloah (Washington). 23 November 1954

Coded Tel. 101; Outg.: 130.09/2310/8

Summary

Herzog cables some personal assessments. The last letter from the secretary of state[2] and Byroade's comments to Blaustein[3] reveal that no real developments can be expected in the near future. Dulles' withdrawal from his proposal made in August might perhaps be explained by the fact that the timetable for the region had been disrupted, in that the secretary's hope for a rapid settlement with Egypt had not come about. He had hoped that in such an event he could make some concession to Israel without undermining efforts to draw close to the Arab states. Byroade's comments on the possibility of an interpretation by Congress of the Three Power Declaration requires that Israel prepare a proposal and try to ensure that Congress also considers the balance of arms. A consultation would be held in Jerusalem on this issue as well as on the coordination of activities in the various capitals and the embassy would be informed accordingly. He asked about the possibility of Lawson being invited by the prime minister so as to explain to him the history of contacts with the secretary. He would pass on to Dulles Israel's astonishment at the postponement so that he would become aware of the facts. A meeting between Eban and the secretary is not desirable at the moment.[7]

Notes

1. Composed apparently by J. Herzog.
2. See No. 443, n. 4.
3. No. 489.
4. In a Radio Cairo broadcast on 1 November praise was expressed for the revolt in Algeria, which was described as "jihad." France demanded explanations from Egypt, and its reply was described as "satisfactory". (See Keesings Contemporary Archives, p. 13924.)
5. See No. 454, n. 1 and No. 467, paragraph b.
6. The matter is unknown.
7. Eban's reply – see No. 492.

492. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 24 November 1954

Coded Tel. 140; Outg.: 93.01/2210/22

Summary

Eban cables that he has his doubts about some of the assumptions made in document No. 491, but he does agree with the part that refers to action to be taken in Congress. He suggests that conclusions on plans for action should not be drawn up based only on what Blaustein had heard from Byroade,[2] who has interests of his own. After further talks with other American individuals he will understand the situation much better and will propose plans for action. In the meantime here are his preliminary conclusions:

1. It is evident that the secretary of state is carrying out a thorough examination of the entire Middle East policy. This has been confirmed from various sources including his letter to Eban.[3]
2. The factors that brought him to make this examination are Israel's activities, including those prior to the elections; the Administration's assessment that it would be faced with difficulties when it submits a request for military aid for the Middle East; Eden's statements sent for his perusal; and the instability in Egypt.

In the light of this situation he sends interim proposals:

1. To clarify how much time the secretary needs to make a reassessment.
2. Since Israel has fundamentally criticized his policy, it cannot query the fact that he had decided to examine the situation. At the same time, Israel can demand that while this examination continues the supply of arms to the Arabs should halt, so as not to inflame the situation in the Middle East.
3. To examine from various sources the secretary's reaction to Dean's memorandum, as in document No. 478.
4. Precisely because this examination is being carried out, a meeting with the secretary should be requested as soon as possible.
5. Meetings with Jews should be held in order to plan activities as proposed in item 1.

He requests approval of this plan of action. It would seem that the meeting would be held during the first week of December.

He proposes that the meeting with Lawson be devoted to a survey of the negotiations with the secretary, including the presentation of documents. The balance of power should be stressed especially, and they should not focus on

the issue of guarantees since in this area there has been some progress. On this latter point, he agrees with Elath and has cabled separately.[9]

Notes

1. No. 491.
2. See No. 489.
3. See No. 443, notes 1 and 4.
4. This apparently refers to the meeting of Congressmen with the secretary of state in the presence of the president which took place on 17 November. At that meeting Saltonstall, a Republican Senator and member of the Senate Armed Forces Committee, raised the question of Israel's security, said that many of the legislators were concerned about this issue and asked what the secretary of state was planning to do. Dulles replied that the Administration was aware of the matter and dealing with it, and he hoped that a satisfactory solution would be found. (See Shiloah to Herzog, WIA132, 22 November 1954, 93.01/2210/20.)
5. See No. 493.
6. See No. 497.
7. No. 478.
8. No. 403.
9. See No. 494.

493. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett (Jerusalem) and J. Tsur (Paris) 24 November 1954

Coded Tel. WPT69; Outg.: 93.01/2210/22

Summary

Eban reports on his conversation with Mendès France.[1] He had explained Israel's apprehensions concerning the policy of supplying arms to the Arabs and the regional security pacts they were creating in the Middle East, which do not include Israel. The French politician listened carefully and then replied:

1. France had taken action to strengthen Israel and would continue to do so.
2. Recently a number of decisions had been taken on his personal authority concerning the sale of arms, and if he were required to make further decisions his attitude would be positive and supportive.

He had managed to talk to Dulles about problems of the region. In his opinion the Israeli evaluation is too pessimistic. The aim of the Americans is

to bring the Arabs closer to the West and thus forestall any temptation to follow the Soviet line. He does not reject this idea and considers it logical. It is his impression that Israel is not facing any danger of its military power being weakened because the supply of arms planned is minimal. He had not discerned in the United States any intention of harming Israel. On the other hand, he appreciates Israel's fear of the network of pacts.[3] France will object to any attempt to expand the organization, which is being further consolidated, or to grant it recognition, if Israel is not included. They parted cordially, and he promised to continue his interest in Israel's problems.[4]

Notes

1. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs instructions prior to the meeting – see No. 480.
2. See Nos. 311, 328.
3. On 24 February 1954, Iraq and Turkey signed a defence pact, the Baghdad Pact, Britain joined on 14 April, Pakistan on 23 September and Iran on 11 October.
4. On 29 November, Eban cabled further on this matter: the unexpected aspect of the conversation was Mendès France's marked inclination to downplay the potential security dangers facing Israel from the arming of its neighbours since he did not believe that this would be on any serious scale. It is difficult to determine whether he had expressed concerns on this issue in a conversation with Dulles, and if so, it is possible that his mind was set at rest by the statement that the arming would be on a small scale and would be given to Iraq, where France did not have considerations of competition, as was the case in Syria and Lebanon, nor did it have any direct bearing on North Africa. (Eban to the West European Division, WIA162, 29 November 1954, 93.01/2210/22.)

494. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett.[1] 24 November 1954

Coded Tel. WTEA71; Outg.: 93.01/2210/22

Summary

Eban refers to Sharett's reply to Elath.[2] He does not agree with the opinion that a Note from Eden that would grant formal and binding validity to the Three Power Declaration would appear to release the United States from a similar undertaking. The contrary holds true: such a Note, if it were possible to obtain it, would be most helpful in this area. Following are his reasons:

1. The United States has over the past few months progressed towards a more forceful interpretation of the Three Power Declaration without changing its wording.

2. Eden's statement has been received positively in the Department of State, but the special structure of the American constitution requires that the approval of Congress be given before Dulles can make a similar statement.
3. There is no doubt that Eden's statement has increased the feeling of obligation on the part of Dulles to take steps regarding Israel.
4. Following upon his conversation with Mendès France[5] he does not fear that the acceptance of an undertaking by Britain and the United States would be considered as damaging to France.
5. Thus he supports the efforts to obtain such a note from Eden, and to take parallel action in the United States. There is no reason not to request that France make a similar undertaking.
6. It is clear to him that the Department of State's interpretation of the Three Power Declaration concerning arms is that no fundamental and dangerous changes should come about in the balance of arms supply, and that absolute equality would not be necessary.

Notes

1. Copy sent to Elath in London.
2. No. 470.
3. See there, n. 5.
4. See No. 402.
5. See No. 493.
6. See No. 495.

495. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division (Jerusalem) and E. Ėlath (London). 25 November 1954

Coded Tel. WTEA72; Outg.: 93.01/2210/22

Summary

Eban reports on a general discussion he had held with Nutting. He outlined all that had happened in London and Washington, including Israel's continuous efforts to reach a clear overall understanding with the two capitals on the issues brought before Dulles and Eden, and especially to clarify Eden's statement in parliament. Nutting replied that Israel's apprehensions of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement were exaggerated. Britain would not provide weapons within the framework of the agreement and Egypt can be relied on to ensure that the installations to be evacuated will no

longer be in use. The idea of making the evacuation conditional upon peace being made with Israel could not be implemented. Britain now had a stronger influence in the area and this would be to Israel's advantage. It is essential to guarantee the stability of Nasser's government, because it has a very narrow basis of support and who knows who would replace him. In Nutting's opinion, Israel had unnecessarily disparaged the Three Power Declaration and it should be considered as a serious undertaking, on the part of the United States as well. He responded to Eden's comment that Israel was about to take steps in London and Paris to clarify the issue, saying that this was unnecessary, as what could be more convincing than what had already been stated. They also discussed the matter of the refugees and he promised that they would maintain a balanced view. He hinted that they expected Israel to agree to the return of a small number of refugees.

Notes

1. On 14 November Naguib was deposed as Egypt's president and placed under house arrest. The charge levelled against him was that he was involved in a plot of the Moslem Brotherhood to kill Prime Minister Nasser. On 17 November, the Council of the Revolution assumed the duties of the presidency.
2. This apparently refers to the negotiation on the Local Commanders' Agreement in Jerusalem – see Nos. 414, 445.
3. See No. 498 and n. 1.

496. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 26 November 1954

Coded Tel. IW609; Outg.: 130.09/2312/8

Summary

Rafael cables to Eban that in preparation for the Security Council debate on the *Bat Galim* episode,[1] efforts should be made to overcome the threat of the Soviet veto.[2] The first opportunity should be taken to speak to Malik.[3] As to the upcoming debate itself, perhaps it would be best to concentrate mainly on the Mixed Armistice Commission resolution that called for the release of the vessel and its continued voyage to its destination. This simple resolution could be preceded by mention of the 1951 resolution, and if possible, a clause should be included that expresses disappointment that this resolution has not yet been implemented. Requests that he send his opinion by cable.[5]

after the visit in Israel he continued on to Lebanon and Egypt. See also No. 549 and n. 1.

2. The complete report in File 93.02/163/15. See also Lourie's summary to the ambassador in London, 29 November 1954, 130.02/2457/2.

499. Rav Aluf M. Dayan [Tel Aviv] to Major-General E.L.M. Burns (Jerusalem). 26 November 1954

Notes

1. In this letter, Burns expressed his agreement, with several linguistic changes, to the draft of the press statement suggested by Dayan regarding the movement of the U.N. Observers in the border areas (see No. 445), but asked to speak with Dayan prior to the publication in order to clarify what he felt should be done regarding the visits of the Observers to sensitive points in the Jerusalem area and the liaison visits at points along the armistice line outside Jerusalem. (The revised draft in File 130.02/2425/9.)

   At a meeting held on 24 November, Burns presented the U.N. position that it was desirable to station Observers at a number of observation points, and that he saw the role of the Observers more as sentries than as patrols. As for the arrangement aspect, he suggested that the requests would be presented in the form of a notice, two weeks in advance, on their wish to set up observation points or to visit the points at specified times. Dayan insisted that the patrols in Jerusalem should be only auxiliary measures in special situations and for a limited time as called for by the circumstances. He was strongly opposed to checks of Israeli military positions and to the guarding of Jerusalem by U.N. Observers. (See Ramati's report on the meeting, 26 November 1954, 130.16/2951/2; Tekoah's telegram to the Israel missions abroad, 25 November 1954, 130.09/2312/8.)

2. In his reply, General Burns confirmed that his intentions corresponded to Dayan's version. He wished to clarify that the last sentence in the penultimate section in Dayan's letter, did not call for the establishment of observation points or regular patrols of U.N. Observers in the Jerusalem area or any other place unless there was a tense situation or an anticipated problem, and then of course requests for visits or taking up observation positions would be submitted. (See Burns to Dayan, 29 November 1954, 130.16/2947/6.) The press statement was issued on 2 December.

500. East European Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Moscow. 26 November 1954

Coded Tel. 200; Outg.: 130.09/2326/1

Summary

The Division reports to the embassy on an article in the *Ha'aretz* newspaper, based on sources from Soviet embassy circles, reacting to the minister of foreign affairs' statement in the Knesset regarding the granting of entry permits to the Israel-Soviet Union Friendship League Congress.[1] The article refuted the minister's arguments. The Division sends a reaction that reaffirms the minister's arguments and repeats its demand for reciprocity of visits.

Notes

1. In reaction to Hazan's remarks in the political debate in the Knesset concerning the refusal to grant permits to the Soviet representatives to the Friendship League Congress (see No. 416), Sharett said that it was inconceivable that emissaries from overseas enjoying the entry permits of a certain state could on arrival show disrespect for the state by boycotting its official authorities and central institutions. He noted that Israel not only did not shy away from mutual clarification, but had even encouraged negotiation on cultural relations but had not received a reply. Sharett added that Israel's request for entry permits for emissaries on its behalf had gone unanswered, and it was also waiting for a reply to its invitation for a visit by a Soviet delegation to Israel as guest of the government. (See *Divrey Haknesset*, [Knesset Reports], fourth session of the Second Knesset, Vol. XVII, 16 November 1954, p. 104. [Hebrew].)

501. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to M. Sharett. 26 November 1954

Copy: 130.02/2443/11

Summary

Herzog relates to the unsuccessful effort by Urrutia to raise once again the issue of Jerusalem.[1] In his opinion, these events constitute an important stage towards full international recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Apparently the Vatican had abandoned its intention to raise the issue at the current United Nations Assembly since it had not found support in the Latin American countries and had not succeeded in persuading Jordan to change

3. In "comments on the draft resolution" Israel maintained that the draft resolution indicated a retreat from the position that the General Assembly had adopted concerning the solution of the refugee problem, a position that had evolved from the term "return" in U.N. Resolution 194(III) from December 1948 to the term "reintegration" whether by repatriation or whether by resettlement, in Resolution 394 of December 1950. The resolutions adopted since then contained the paragraphs on repatriation and compensation, together with paragraphs on reintegration. In the present draft resolution they had abandoned this wording, and the term reintegration was omitted. In the list of suggested corrections Israel had suggested restoring the term "reintegration" to the introduction and to paragraphs in the body of the resolution, in which it had been omitted or replaced by other terms. (See Kidron to the M.F.A., X420, 29 November 1954, 130.09/2331/14); corrections and recommendations in File 93.03/3065/7).
4. In a speech on 30 November to the Ad Hoc Committee and on 4 December in the Assembly plenum Ordonneau explained in the name of the four sponsors of the motion that the draft resolution was essentially technical, and its whole intention was to extend the duration of activity of one of the U.N. organizations. The draft resolution was a link in the chain of resolutions, did not say anything new about the previous resolutions and was not trying to change the existing legal situation. First of all, the mandate of the UNRWA remained as defined in the resolution of 2 December 1950; secondly, the draft resolution once again cites the decisive paragraph in the resolution of 11 December 1948 (paragraph 11, which speaks of the right of the refugees wishing to return to their places of residence and about the right of those not wishing to return to receive compensation), and there was never an intention to depart from it. (See *GAOR, Ninth Session, Ad Hoc Political Committee*, 38th meeting, 30 November 1954, p. 177; Comay's memorandum, 6 December 1954, appendix J, 130.02/2404/14.)
5. Rafael agreed to the proposal and explained that the concern in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the emphasis on the return derived from the fear that in London and Washington a policy was being crystallized to demand from Israel territorial concessions for the settlement of the refugees, in the event of its refusal to consider the idea of partial return. (See Rafael to the Israel mission to the U.N., TNWA613, 30 November 1954, 130.09/2339/1.) See also No. 507.

504. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 30 November 1954

Coded Tel. 612; Outg.: 130.09/2312/8

Summary

Tekoah reports on the Jordanians' last minute refusal to sign an agreement between local commanders in Jerusalem.[1] At first they demanded that Burns sign as a witness, the Israelis had hinted that they would agree to this, but the Jordanians contacted Amman, and hardened their stand, emphatically

insisting that the United Nations sign as a party to the agreement. Burns was furious and stated that in future he would require that agreements be initialled prior to the final signing. The signing was postponed and Burns undertook to prepare a new proposal.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 445. On 23 November, Burns relayed to Israel the text of the Local Commanders' Agreement in Jerusalem which the Jordanians had agreed to, and which the U.N. appeared in as a witness. In a meeting of Burns with Dayan on 24 November, this wording of the agreement and its signing at the end of the month was agreed upon. (See Shalev's survey, 28 January 1955; report on Dayan's meeting with Burns, both in 130.16/2948/17.)
2. See Nos. 511, 515.

505. A. Eban (New York) to the President of the Security Council. 30 November 1954

Notes

1. Published as U.N. Document S/3325.
2. See Nos. 389, 395 and 442.
3. See No. 486 and n. 1.
4. On the debate in the Security Council see No. 523.

506. East European Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Moscow. 30 November 1954

Coded Tel. 210; Outg.: 130.09/2326/1

Summary

The Division reports on the meeting of the prime minister and minister of foreign affairs with representatives of the permanent members of the Security Council in preparation for the debate in the Council on the *Bat Galim* episode.[1,2] He asked the Soviet ambassador that his country support Israel's stand in the Security Council and once the resolution is passed to contact Egypt directly with the demand that free navigation be guaranteed. He pointed out to the ambassador that his country had a similar problem –

quickly as possible and would release the ship together with its crew and cargo, but would not change its stand in principle on the issue of passage of vessels in the future. Eban replied that even if the Egyptians were not prepared to change their stand in principle overnight it is essential that the Powers exploit the opportunity to reaffirm their position on the overall problem. Byroade reiterated the United States stand in principle on the matter of free passage. The United States would make a clear statement at the United Nations and take steps in the required direction in Cairo.[1]

Concerning the prisoners, Eban requested that the Americans use their influence in Cairo to mitigate the sentences. Byroade replied that he agreed that steps should be taken to prevent deterioration of relations as a result of the trial, but was unable to intervene in the legal process in Egypt. He added that according to information he had received from Cairo stories about persecution of Jews were exaggerated and there was no proof that the prisoners had been tortured.

Notes

1. The last section worried Sharett. Byroade spoke of the release of the ship – "a pernicious and totally unacceptable term", whereas on Eban's part there was no stress at all that release southwards was a violation of Israel's right and defiance of the Security Council. The Department of State had to know that Israel would under no circumstances permit compromise with this shameful solution, he wrote, and added that there were increasing signs that Egypt was distressed before the debate in the Security Council, and therefore the maximum pressure possible must be applied. (Telegram to the Israel embassy in Washington, TNWA618, 2 December 1954, 130.09/2312/8.)
2. The arrest of the Israeli sabotage network in Egypt.
3. In his speech in the context of the political debate on 15 November (see No. 476, Editorial Note), Sharett referred to the affair of those arrested in Egypt and said that the plot being hatched in Alexandria and the show trial being organized there against a group of Jews who had fallen victim to a trumped up libel of spying testified to how far Egypt was removed from the spirit of moderation and the pursuit of peace.
4. See No. 489.

509. Y. Palmon (Paris, London)[1] to G. Rafael. 30 November 1954

Copy: 130.15/3744/3

Summary

Palmon reports on the request received from Kamal Youssef to meet with Israeli representatives. The request had come following deliberations in the junta ruling Egypt which ended with a decision that it would be desirable to reach agreement with Israel. Nasser had supported the decision but Salih Salim had opposed it. Youssef had been asked to sound out the Israeli position on certain specific issues and this was the purpose of the meeting he had requested through the mediation of an Egyptian Jew visiting Paris. In an earlier meeting he had held with Avni, the parties had exchanged position papers, compared these, and more or less approved the papers submitted by the other party. The Egyptian document was enclosed. At the end of the meeting, Youssef stated that he would pass on the content to Okasha and to Muhi al-Din as well. An attempt made at the earlier meeting to arrange a further meeting, this time with Palmon, did not meet with success.

Palmon raises a number of conjectures concerning this approach. It is possible that such deliberations were held and the decision taken by the Egyptian junta, but it is also possible that this was nothing but a ploy to obtain information. There is a further possibility that it was the intention of the Egyptians to obtain tranquillity and goodwill for the few months required to subdue the Moslem Brotherhood and improve relations with the United States and France. It is also possible that the move is the outcome of a struggle within the junta between Nasser, whose aim is to modernize Egypt, and Salim, who wished to rely on Arab and Moslem forces. Whatever the causes, the meeting should take place and it be made clear to them that it was Israel's intention to come to an arrangement, as had been revealed recently by Israel's support of attempts to reach a direct arrangement with the Palestinians in the matter of the blocked accounts. He attaches Youssef's paper and requests instructions.

Youssef's paper:

1. In Israel there is readiness to enter into negotiations and to reach an understanding with Egypt in general and with the present government in particular.

2. Israel is convinced that it is possible to reach solutions to the problems between the two countries and especially with the present government, if the desire for it exists there.

512. A. Eban (Washington) to W. Eytan. 1 December 1954

Notes

1. The Dutch ambassador visited the embassy on December 1 in order to express his foreign minister's disappointment over Israel's abstention in the vote on the draft resolution concerning Irian (Dutch New Guinea) which was held that same day in the First Committee (See No. 384.) This resolution called on the parties to continue their efforts to resolve the dispute in the spirit of the U.N. Charter principles, and to report on the progress to the next Assembly session. Eban replied that Israel had extended assistance in this matter on all fronts and had even voted against the paragraph on raising the issue at the next session of the Assembly. The Dutch ambassador requested that in the voting in the Assembly plenum Israel should vote against the draft resolution in its entirety. (See Eban to Eytan, W171, 1 December 1954, 93.01/2211/12.)

   In an additional telegram, Eban suggested that if a way were found to comply with the Dutch wishes in this matter, it would be possible in return to enlist their support in the Suez Canal matter. (See telegram W175, 1 December 1954, there).
2. Eytan agreed that the Israeli interest called for unstinting support for the Netherlands, and he therefore instructed Eban to vote against the motion in its entirety when it came up at the Assembly plenum, and not to publicly explain the vote, but after the voting to tell the Indians, the Latin Americans and whoever would ask, that Israel owed nothing to Indonesia for its constant hostility towards Israel. (See Eytan, TNWA620 to Eban. 2 December 1954, 130.09/2312/8.) In the event Israel voted against the motion in the Assembly plenum. The motion was not carried since it did not receive the required two-thirds majority.

513. A. Lourie (Jerusalem) to E. Elath (London). 2 December 1954

Coded Tel. 683; Outg: 130.09/2320/1

Summary

Lourie reports on his meeting with Moore of the British embassy, who came to inform him that Britain had issued a strong call to Amman to show the highest possible self-restraint following the recent incident.[1] Regarding the *Bat Galim* issue, he said that he was not aware of the intentions of the Egyptians. He asked if the Israelis would be prepared to meet the Egyptians half way, apparently implying that the ship would be released together with its crew but not allowed to continue to Haifa. He hinted that Nasser wanted to move towards finding a solution to the problem of the Canal, but is unable to do so at the present time. He proposed that Israel be satisfied with the

liberation of the vessel. Lourie brought to Moore's attention the fact that the minister had told Nicholls that the main concern was that the ship be allowed to proceed to the north.

Notes

1. See No. 511 and n. 2.
2. On 23-24 November, the Armistice Commission discussed Israel's complaint regarding the opening of fire by Jordanian forces from across the border on 22 November on a group of surveyors engaged in marking the armistice line in the vicinity of Mevo Betar in Israeli territory. In the incident an Israeli officer was wounded. With the votes of the chairman and the Israeli delegation the Commission adopted the Israeli draft resolution condemning Jordan. (See report of the Commission session, 26 November 1954, 130.09/2429/8.)

514. J. Tsur (Paris) to M. Sharett. 2 December 1954

Coded Tel. 607; Inc.: 130.09/2345/4

Summary

Tsur writes about the trial of the imprisoned Jews about to open in the coming week. The coincidence of this trial taking place at the same time as the trial of members of the Moslem Brotherhood[1] is cause for concern. He had the impression that the activities carried out by Israel so energetically had now subsided. In France everything possible had been done, but members of the mission who had returned from Egypt had stressed the importance of action in the United States.[2] He was told that on orders from Israel, the matter of the trial had not been broached at the meeting held with the Egyptians during the previous week.[3] Jewish institutions and individuals who had taken an active role at the time of the trials in Romania[4] had proposed the organization of protest rallies and arousing public opinion. In keeping with instructions he had received, the embassy had prevented this and he asks if the time had not come to change these directives.

Notes

1. See No. 459 and n. 2.
2. See No. 468.
3. See No. 509. On this matter, Rafael promised that no instruction had been given not to bring up the trial at this meeting. In all the contacts held with the Egyptians

recently the matter of the trial had been raised, and this would also be the case in any future meetings. (See Rafael to Tsur, Telegram 579, 5 December 1954, 130.09/2345/8.)

4. See No. 286.

515. Major-General E.L.M. Burns (Jerusalem) to Rav Aluf M. Dayan. 3 December 1954

Notes

1. See No. 504 and n. 1. At a meeting with Eytan on 2 December, Burns reported that he had talked with the Jordanian Minister of Defence Nusaibah who claimed that Jordan's approval of the Local Commanders' Agreement had been given to a draft on which the U.N. appeared as one of the signatories, and that its policy was to avoid signing bilateral agreements with Israel. Burns explained that, although Glubb had given his consent to the wording of the agreement that they were about to sign, apparently by mistake a different draft had been given to the Jordanian government. Eytan observed that in the past Jordan had signed bilateral agreements, such as for instance the previous commanders' agreement or the agreement about Latrun, which was renewed at the end of November, and the U.N. appeared on it as a witness only. (See Tekoah's telegram to the Israel missions abroad, 3 December 1954, 130.09/2310/8.)
2. Dayan's reply see No. 533.

516. M. Kidron (New York) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 3 December 1954

Notes

1. In an earlier telegram, that was sent in reaction to No. 508, Kidron wrote that the Three Powers were toying with the idea of a resolution demanding the freeing of the ship with its crew and cargo, but without the condition of the direction of the voyage and without mentioning the September 1951 resolution. (See Kidron to the M.F.A., X436, 2 December 1954, 93.01/2182/3.)
2. See No. 505.
3. This paragraph stated that "where interpretation of the meaning of a particular provision of this Agreement is at issue, the Commission's interpretation shall prevail." See Vol. 3, Appendix 6, p. 696.
4. The Security Council resolution concerning the Qibya operation, of 24 November 1953, see Vol. 8, No. 425 (Editorial Note).

517. Israel Embassy in Paris to the West European Division. 3 December 1954

Coded Tel. 612; Inc.: 130.02/2452/4

Summary

Bendor had talked to Maillard. They had discussed the matter of the *Bat Galim* and Bendor had reiterated the importance of the issue. Israel would not be content with repetition of the 1951 resolution and only a firm stand by France and its associates would convince the Egyptians. Maillard said that their position on freedom of passage was well known, their approach had always been based on legal principles and they would not budge from that. He said that they had submitted a memorandum to the Egyptians regarding freedom of navigation, relying on the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement. The Scandinavian countries, Greece and Japan had also submitted a similar memorandum. The United States and Turkey had not yet acted.

Maillard had raised two matters. The first was the problem of Jerusalem, about which they were considering taking action after the signing of the Local Commanders' Agreement,[3] and continuing the deliberations begun at the initiative of the consuls;[4] proposals had not yet been finalized, but the French understood that Israel is not interested in increasing Burns' influence. The second matter was the purchase of arms. He expressed his astonishment that orders had been placed in Britain for jet planes and tanks,[5] especially because it was their understanding that Israel wished to transfer to French equipment. Bendor replied that Israel was interested in heavy tanks, such as Centurions, that the French did not have. He promised to look into the matter of the jet planes.

Notes

1. See No. 506 and n. 2.
2. On 26 November, the news agencies reported from Suez that on that same day the Egyptian authorities had sold by public auction about 400 boxes of meat from the *Bat Galim* cargo, and the rest of the cargo, plywood, would shortly be offered for sale. The Egyptians explained that they had sold the meat cargo since it was about to perish and they had lodged the income with the court. (See telegrams from Rafael to the embassy in London, No. 653, 26 November 1954, 93.04/41/56; Gazit to Rafael, telegram 239, 30 November 1954, 130.09/2320/2.)
3. See No. 515 and notes.
4. See No. 344 and n. 1.
5. This subject came up once again in two further meetings with Maillard on 7 and 15 December. Bendor explained that Israel had indeed purchased an additional number

of "Meteor" fighters from Britain, to complete the squadron of aircraft of this type, the agreement for their purchase having been signed before the "Mystère" deal with France was finalized. Maillard was not satisfied with the explanation. He emphasized the importance of complete frankness in relations between himself and the Israel embassy on this subject, and again stressed that in arms deals with Israel, France had a political consideration, which at times outweighed the commercial consideration. (See Bendor to the West European Division, 9 December 1954, 16 December 1954, 130.20/2522/21.)

In 1953 the first 7 of 14 "Meteor" fighters arrived in Israel whose sale Britain had approved in September 1952, and in January 1954 Moore informed Eytan that approval had been given for the sale of a further 7 aircraft. (See Moore to Eytan, 14 January 1954, 130.02/2394/15.)

518. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to A. Eban and R. Shiloah (Washington). 3 December 1954

Notes

1. See No. 502, n. 6.
2. In a follow-up telegram, Eytan further directed that Caffrey should be brought in to warn Nasser and his group against imposing the death penalty and against inflaming the mob, which was likely to make the death sentences almost inevitable. (See his telegram to the embassy in Washington, TNWA622, 3 December 1954, 130.09/2312/8.) Directives in this vein were also sent to the ambassadors in London and Paris.

   In response to these two telegrams from Eytan, Shiloah reported that Byroade had promised to instruct Caffrey to act to prevent harsh sentences, but stated that their intervention would be political and not judicial; that he would consult with Bedell Smith, who was out of Washington, the following week, and Blaustein was due to meet that same day with Byroade. (See Shiloah to Eytan WIA188, 3 December 1954, 93.01/2211/12.)

519. M. Kidron (New York) to G. Rafael. 4 December 1954

Coded Tel. XA445; Outg: 93.01/2182/3

Summary

Kidron reports on his conversation with Protitch, of the Security Council secretariat, who had informed him of the Egyptians' decision to release the crew and cargo of the *Bat Galim.*[1] Nothing was said about the ship. Kidron believes that this step was the result of British and American pressure and

possibly as a consequence of the circulation of the wording of the Israeli motion.[2] Eban proposed that immediately after the Egyptian statement is made, Israel should inform foreign representatives and the press that it continues to demand the release of the vessel and the continuation of its voyage as scheduled.[3]

Notes

1. See Omar Lutfi's letter to the president of the Security Council, 4 December 1954, U.N. Document S/3326. At the same time, Burns transmitted a letter from the senior Egyptian representative on the Commission to the Israeli representative on the Mixed Armistice Commission containing a message intended for him of readiness to release the ship's cargo immediately. (See Burns to Ramati, 4 December 1954, 130.02/2436/7.)
2. See No. 516.
3. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs they accepted Eban's suggestion. Rafael instructed the U.N. representative that on the publication of the Egyptian letter the mission would publish a statement, and as long as no clear Egyptian commitment had been received that the ship would continue on its way, it must insist on a Security Council meeting. (See Rafael to Kidron, Y726, 5 December 1954, 130.09/2331/7.)

   On the Security Council debate on December 7, see No. 523.

520. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 4 December 1954

Coded Tel. WIA191; Outg.: 93.01/2211/12

Summary

Eban cables that on the basis of statements publicly attributed to Dulles that the United States is re-examining its Middle East policy, Israel should take the initiative, and not stand aside while matters are being decided. Thus, he recommends an early meeting with Dulles to be devoted to the following subjects:

A description and evaluation of events which had taken place since their last meeting, including increased Arab hostility, Eden's statement[2] and Sharett's address in the Knesset.[3] The fact is that Israel's concerns have not ceased.

Defining the basis of Israel's concern and rejecting the argument that the problem could be solved by a reinterpretation of the 1950 declaration.[4] They must insert the idea that the problem is complex, and Israel's concern

includes the provision of military aid to the Arab countries, while ignoring Israel's position when establishing a regional defence system.

A description of the political and public state of affairs that have arisen as the consequence of Dulles' letters and statements. He should be asked as to how he sees the continuation of discussion on this subject in terms of a timetable ànd the procedure relating to cooperation with Israel.

Emphasizing the importance of the American attitude to the *Bat Galim* episode.

He requests Sharett's permission for the meeting. In his opinion, Sharett should talk to Lawson to explain the matter in depth.[5]

Notes

1. The reference is to a public declaration made by Sobeloff, the United States solicitor-general, in Dulles's name, at a reception in honour of the Weizmann Institute, in Washington on 2 December, concerning the reassessment of the Middle East policy of the United States in which the secretary of state was engaged, and his readiness to cooperate with the representatives of Israel in formulating the means to allay Israel's concerns and its sense of isolation. (See Eban to Elath, WE76, 6 December 1954, 93.01/2211/12.)
2. See No. 454, n. 1.
3. See No. 476 (Editorial Note).
4. On 2 December the *New York Times* printed a report that the Department of State was considering issuing a declaration re-affirming the United States government's determination to do all in its power to prevent aggression in the Middle East; and that according to diplomatic sources in Washington, Israel should view such a declaration as satisfactory if the American Congress would adopt an appropriate resolution and if Britain and France would endorse it.

   In a conversation with Shiloah on 26 November Murphy tried to extract from him what was the most central feature in Israel's demands – was it not the security guarantee? Shiloah replied that the problems of balance of power, the inclusion of Israel in the plans for military aid and the security guarantee were interwoven, and the security guarantee by itself, if not accompanied by an appropriate practical military policy, would be of little value. Shiloah for his part asked if the Department of State was prepared to interpret publicly the Three Power Declaration as Eden had done, and was told that they could not do so without the approval of Congress. (See Shiloah to Herzog, WIA153, 26 November 1954, 93.01/2210/22.)
5. Sharett decided not to invite Lawson for the present, but encouraged Eban to meet with Dulles, and in the light of the results of the meeting he would reconsider whether to invite him. (The United State Division to Eban, IW144, 7 December 1954, 130.09/2310/8.) The meeting with Dulles did not take place because he was too busy, and in the end Eban spoke at Dulles's suggestion with the new Under-Secretary of State Hoover – see No. 550.

521. J. Herzog (Jerusalem) to the Israel Ambassador in Washington. 6 December 1954

Orig.: 93.08/417/4

Summary

Herzog writes that there is a feeling in the Ministry that the time had come to sum up the results of Israeli diplomatic efforts in the three capitals during the past months concerning plans to supply arms and the organization of regional defence in the Middle East. Eban's contention that there is no basic difference in the attitudes of the Powers is acceptable from the point of view of the main aim of defence of the region against communist penetration, but in the opinion of Ministry officials there are differences regarding some aspects of implementation. While there is unanimity as to the need for military aid to the Arabs, England and France have reservations about the extent of the armament. There are also differences in the form the regional organization should take. The United States is endeavouring to have each Arab country join the Turkey-Pakistan alliance individually, as they consider this pact to be the main focus of the defence of the region. The British, however, in their desire to protect their own interests, are hesitating, and even more so the French. It is Herzog's feeling that until the agreement on military aid to Egypt is concluded, the secretary of state wishes to placate Israel by a declaration that will in essence be a repetition of the Three Power Declaration with certain added emphases. In the past he had expressed this idea but learned that Eban was dubious about it.[3] In any event, if such a declaration was made, care must be taken that this would not be considered as final but rather as a beginning of more practical steps, and especially the maintenance of the balance of power. He agrees with Eban that the secretary of state's re-examination should not be permitted to continue without Israel's involvement, and thus his forthcoming meeting with Dulles is important.

Notes

1. This apparently refers to No. 494.
2. See No. 493.
3. See Nos. 491 and 492.
4. See No. 520 and n. 5.

522. A. Eban (Washington) to H.E. Stassen (Washington). 6 December 1954

Notes

1. No. 477.
2. At the meeting, Eban brought up the requests contained in the letter presented here. (See Eban to the United States Division, WIA161, 29 November 1954, 130.09/2310/12.)
3. This apparently refers to the meeting which took place on 24 August between the Minister of Finance Eshkol and the American chargé d'affaires. Eshkol expressed concern over the too steep decline in the level of aid – it now being reduced to 40 million dollars, which meant halting the promising process of development and construction in Israel. At the beginning of September, Sherman met with Powell from the Foreign Operations Administration (FOA) and Gardiner from the Department of State in an attempt to fix the amount of the grant at 48 million dollars. (See Eytan's record of this conversation, 24 August 1954, and resumé of the telegram from Sherman, 10 September 1954, 130.20/2486/4.)
4. The Grant-in-Aid agreement for 1954-1955 was signed on 31 January 1955 in the form of an exchange of letters between the United States ambassador and Sharett. On 14 April 1955, Stassen informed Eban that it had been decided to increase the grant to 40 million dollars. (See the correspondence in File 130.20/2486/4). See also No. 567.

523. M. Kidron (New York) to G. Rafael. 7 December 1954

Coded Tel. 468; Inc.: 130.09/2331/14

Summary

Kidron writes about the Security Council debate on the *Bat Galim* episode. Lutfi, the Egyptian delegate, boringly declaimed the Egyptian arguments at length, during the course of which he recalled the episode of the Egyptian ship, *Samir*, and three other vessels.[1] The British delegate initiated a recess in the debate to allow further negotiations in Cairo.[2] In his opinion there was more than a "sporting chance" to attain the ship's release within a week to ten days. The American delegate also stated that they too would take steps in Cairo.

The Israeli delegation makes the following proposals:

1. During the next ten days to contact the three Powers a number of times to find out the results of their efforts in Cairo.

2. In the event that the ship was not released during this period, Israel should call for the convening of the Security Council.

3. Internal considerations permitting, the crew should not be allowed to return without the ship.

4. To prepare another vessel to sail at the beginning of January, preferably an oil tanker flying a foreign flag.[3]

Notes

1. The Egyptian boat *Samir* was apprehended on 29 December 1952, according to Israel in its territorial waters. The cargo was returned to Egypt in February but the boat was returned only in July 1953 after Egypt had agreed to sign a shipping agreement (see No. 486, n. 3). The crew members were returned only in September 1953 after having served three months in prison. (See correspondence in File 130.16/2952/5.) As for the other three boats apprehended in the months March-July 1954, Israel refused to abide by the shipping agreement in their case, claiming that their entry into its territorial waters was unjustified, neither because of a storm nor for any other reason.
2. The Security Council halted its discussions that day at the suggestion of the British representative, in order for the Council president to consult with the Council members and would reconvene it when there was a general feeling that the discussions could be usefully continued. (See *SCOR, Ninth Year*, 686th meeting, 7 December 1954.)
3. Rafael replied that the minister would meet the following day with the ambassadors of the United States and Britain, and the Ministry instructed all the missions involved to begin wide-ranging activity. The U.N. mission was instructed to inform all those concerned that if within eight days the ship was not allowed to continue on its way to Haifa, Israel would demand the convening of the Security Council. Rafael also alluded to the possibility that the crew would be returned to Israel by land. In such a case Israel would not refuse to receive the men, but would protest against any cooperation of U.N. personnel with the Egyptians which would thereby be lending a hand to the violation of the Armistice Agreement and the specific resolution of the Armistice Commission concerning the *Bat Galim*. (See Rafael to the Israel mission to the U.N., Telegram 756, 9 December 1954, 130.09/2331/7.) See also No. 532.

   Sharett did in fact meet with ambassadors Nicholls and Lawson on 10 December and presented a similar demand to them. (See telegrams from Sharett to the Israel embassy in London, Telegram 747, 12 December 1954, 130.09/2320/1, and to the Israel embassy in Washington, TNW637, 12 December 1954, 130.09/2312/8.)

524. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in London. 7 December 1954

Coded Tel. 712; Outg: 130.09/2320/1

Summary

Sharett refers to the embassy's cable outlining the British attitude to the *Bat Galim*.[1] He stresses that even if the ship were to be released and sent southward and the crew and the cargo sent northward, this would be a failure. The campaign over the *Bat Galim* is not about a consignment of cargo, there had been many cases of a successful passage of cargo to Israel in the past, but about the principle of passage through the Suez Canal under an Israeli flag, and this must be stressed repeatedly.

Note

1. This telegram contains a summary of the British position regarding the *Bat Galim* episode and the general question of passage through the Suez Canal. The British recognize Israel's right of passage of the ship on the basis of the Security Council resolution of 1951, and they would demand its release with the crew and the cargo. As for the general question, they were convinced that the issue was a bargaining point which the Egyptians would not abandon without receiving something in return, and no amount of pressure would deter them. (The telegram, of 2 December 1954, in File 130.09/2320/2.)

525. Y. Shimoni (Washington) to J. Herzog. 7 December 1954

Orig.: 130.02/3694/9

Summary

This letter is part of a controversy between Shimoni and Herzog concerning the essence of the Johnston plan and tactics involved.[1] Shimoni reiterates his view that the idea of using Lake Tiberias as a reservoir should not be rejected, but objection should be voiced only against international supervision and infringement of Israeli sovereignty. In his opinion, this approach should be explained to Johnston and not just restricted to a general statement of objection to supervision over Lake Tiberias. He also believes that there should be a more exact definition of Israel's approach as objection to territorial supervision, but there is no point to objecting to an authority

that would supervise the amount of water flowing out of Lake Tiberias, a sort of water master. As far as tactics are concerned, he repeats his attitude that it is preferable to delay the confrontation as long as possible, but this is not vital and if the government is of a different opinion it should state this now. It should certainly define its objection clearly and restrict it to the issue of international supervision.[2]

Notes

1. In this correspondence, differences of opinion surfaced between Herzog and Shimoni over the question of the use of Lake Tiberias in the Johnston plan. Shimoni argued that the position adopted by Israel on this question was neither correct nor just. The idea that Lake Tiberias would serve as a central reservoir lake for the irrigation and power network of the Jordan and Yarmuk Rivers was a patently Israeli idea, which had been included in previous water plans and Israel had advocated it for years. Israel must not retreat from this position even if there was a fear that the use of Lake Tiberias as a central reservoir would create demands for international supervision or some other violation of the sovereignty of Lake Tiberias and its shores. Even the opposition to its very use as a reservoir in itself did not have to mean opposition to the survey and the surveying, because these in no way endangered its position on this question, and only alienated Johnston over a matter which was neither basic nor crucial. (See Shimoni to Herzog, 16 November 1954, 130.02/3694/9.)

   Herzog replied that Israel's position on the Lake Tiberias issue was not new, and had been made clear to Johnston on a number of occasions. It was best to make it clear now, and not to leave the issue pending and to clash over it at a final stage of the negotiations. Regarding the survey, he replied that the considerations raised by Shimoni had been discussed and gone over many times in consultations with the prime minister and the ministers of finance and agriculture, but the trouble was that there was no absolute certainty regarding Johnston's intentions. In this situation it had been decided to try to limit the scope of the survey and its implementation as much as possible. (See Herzog to Shimoni, 21 November 1954, ibid.)
2. In his reply, Herzog did not see anything wrong with expressing opposition over the essentials, and it was preferable to express it comprehensively without detailing the reasons, and moreover the water expert Criddle had confirmed that there was no fundamental engineering necessity to use Lake Tiberias as a reservoir, at least for the first few years. It was true that Israel had given its consent to a water master with the highest technical qualifications, but it was best that his points of supervision should be kept to a minimum. Regarding the matter of tactics, Herzog stood by his opinion that it was preferable to have a confrontation now than to postpone the clash to a later stage, in order not to give Johnston the erroneous impression that Israel had changed its position. (Letter to Shimoni, 16 December 1954, ibid.)

526. D. Avni (Paris) to G. Rafael. 7 December 1954

Coded Tel. 630; Inc.: 130.09/2345/4

Summary

Avni reports on his meeting with Okasha.[1] The atmosphere was completely different from earlier meetings, and was official and stiff. He said that he was not aware of any sign of compromise coming from Egypt of late. He did not agree with Israel's contention that it had practiced restraint in its reactions to border incidents, and added that he was aware that Israel had attacked both in the Gaza Strip and on the Jordan border. There was no locus for contact between the two countries other than in the Mixed Armistice Commission. As for the accused in Egypt, he said that justice had to take its course and even Nasser was unable to intervene in this process.

Despite the above, Avni reiterated that within Israel there was a desire to find ways to ease the tension. He requested that the information be passed on to his superiors and asked to receive a reply. Okasha replied that in his personal opinion a reply was not required – but if one were forthcoming he would pass it on. They parted without setting a date for a further meeting. The first secretary attended the meeting but did not utter a word. He seemed to be a sort of unfriendly political commissar.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 509.
2. Rafael rebuked Avni for having entered into conversation on such important topics, when he spoke of signs of compromise in Egypt and about contacts outside the Armistice Commission, when he realized already at the start of the conversation that there was no room for a friendly conversation. (See Rafael to Avni, 10 December 1954, 130.15/3738/1; see also the exchange of letters between Rafael and Palmon, 10 December 1954 and undated, there.)

527. Y. Tekoah [Jerusalem] to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 8 December 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2429/8

Summary

Tekoah writes about the Local Commanders' Agreement in Jerusalem,[1] stressing a number of facts, mainly the Jordanian demand raised from time to time and at the last moment, to involve the United Nations and its personnel as much as possible in the Agreement.[2] However, it does seem that Jordan's attitude to the Agreement is not based on any rigid political principle and thus Israel should avoid determining such a principle by agreeing to grant the U.N. special status as a party to agreements between Israel and Jordan, of whatever type. He had information to the effect that after the Local Commanders' Agreement is signed, General Burns, under the influence of the Powers, intends to submit a proposal for the demilitarization of the holy places in Jerusalem. In the light of this, Tekoah is of the opinion that it would be best not to raise the U.N. to the level of having equal rights with Israel and Jordan regarding arrangements in Jerusalem. Thus, it would be advisable not to rush to sign the Agreement. Delaying the Agreement could give Israel sufficient time politically to prevent the raising of the demilitarization proposal. In the light of this, he believes it would be worthwhile to object to General Burns signing the Local Commanders' Agreement as a party. If developments require this, it would be possible to make do with a statement by both parties to the effect that an arrangement has been reached in accordance with the directives and regulations laid down in the draft agreement.[3]

Notes

1. See Nos. 504, 515.
2. See No. 414.
3. See No. 533 and notes.

528. A. Eban (Washington) to G. Rafael. 8 December 1954

Coded Tel. WIA210; Outg.: 93.01/2211/12

Summary

Eban cables that Wadsworth had informed him that the inclination of the United States on the issue of the *Bat Galim* is to attain implementation of the resolution of the Mixed Armistice Commission calling for the release of the vessel with its cargo and crew.[1] He had informed the Egyptians accordingly and stated that their statement of the release of the crew and cargo would not suffice. If the British and Americans succeed in this, they would convene the Security Council which would express its satisfaction with the result. The United States delegate would add an expression of its support of the 1951 resolution and it can be expected that the majority of Council members would do likewise. It is obvious from this that the West would be satisfied with this solution and would not risk submitting a new resolution. If the Egyptians do not bring the matter to an end, there would be no course but to submit a motion. Requests comments and instructions.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 486.
2. Sharett replied: "If release means freedom to sail to Haifa and not to Massawa, then we shall not press for a new resolution and see in this implementation of 1951. But I am afraid that the implementation of the resolution of the Armistice Commission as far as Wadsworth is concerned does not entail continuation of the voyage, but simply release, so that returning to the Red Sea also is considered as doing one's duty, and in this is now the danger which has to be confronted by all available means." (See telegram to Eban, TNWA631, 10 December 1954, 130.09/2312/8.)

529. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to J. Tsur (Paris). 8 December 1954

Coded Tel. 595; Outg.: 130.09/2345/8

Summary

Sharett sends directives to Tsur in preparation for his meeting with Mendès France.[1] The point of departure will be his meeting with Eban[2] at which Mendès France had promised France's support for strengthening Israel. Tsur

should tell him that this statement had been a source of encouragement. On the other hand, it should be stressed that Israel considers that the alliance evolving between Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq and Iran is a source of danger. (In his talk with Eban he had spoken about this alliance positively.) He should request financial assistance for the military equipment Israel was purchasing in France and its support in breaking the economic blockade and other manifestations of Arab hostility, including the blockade of the Suez Canal. In addition, he should raise the problem of North African Jewry,[3] stressing the need for direct contact between the governments of Israel and France on this issue. Israel would strive to direct its activities among the Jews in these countries in accordance with French interests, but expects that France would guarantee the security of North African Jews, their property and freedom of movement.

Notes

1. Tsur reported that a meeting had been scheduled for him with Mendès France, and he intended to speak about the fundamental importance of the *Bat Galim* affair, the Arab boycott, the supply of arms and giving concessions to Israel similar to those in the O.E.E.C., and perhaps also about the trial affair in Egypt. (See Tsur to the prime minister, 7 December 1954, 130.09/2345/4.) On the meeting itself see No. 535.
2. See No. 493.
3. See No. 475.

530. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 9 December 1954

Coded Tel. IW149; Outg.: 130.09/2310/8

Summary

Sharett cables that following the hanging in Cairo of the six condemned members of the Moslem Brotherhood,[1] the danger being faced by the Jews indicted in Egypt has become most acute. The United States must be urged to state that the execution of these men would damage U.S.-Egyptian relations and undermine the possibility of peace in the Middle East. It should be explained to the Americans that the line of self-restraint taken by Israel could break down completely under the growing pressure of unilateral provocations, the fear of the West evading the *Bat Galim* issue,[2] and the excessive severity of the death sentences imposed at the trial in Egypt. He had spoken briefly and emphatically with George Allen[4] in this vein.

Notes

1. On 7 December six of the leading members of the Moslem Brotherhood, who had been sentenced to death for the crime of plotting to overthrow the revolutionary regime in Egypt, were hanged in Cairo – see No. 459 and n. 2.
2. See No. 528.
3. See No. 502 and n. 6.
4. George V. Allen, who was about to take up his post as U.S. under-secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs, visited Israel on 7-10 December in the context of a familiarization tour in the Middle East. During a meeting at the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem, many of the issues still pending between the United States and Israel were surveyed, among them the question of Jerusalem, the arms policy in the Middle East, refugees, relations with the Arab States and the United States attitude to Israel's security. (See Herzog's report on the meeting in reports to Israel's missions abroad, 20 December 1954, and a weekly survey, George Allen's visit in Israel, both in File 130.20/2475/3.)

   Eban's reply to the document printed here see No. 531.

531. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 9 December 1954

Notes

1. No. 530.
2. No. 518, n. 2.
3. See No. 502 and n. 6.
4. Eban reported on additional steps he had taken in the matter of the accused in Egypt: he had written to Murphy after their meeting, and entreated Blaustein to cable Riad, via Byroade, to remind him of his promise to prevent a grave setback to any hope of easing the tension. Eban added that he would soon be speaking with Nutting. He also mentioned the names of prominent Jewish personalities who were referring to the Egyptian ambassador and to the Department of State. Eban presumed that in Israel they had contacted Ambassador Lawson and suggested seriously considering talking with George Allen who was visiting Israel (see No. 530, n. 4), especially if he would be continuing on to Cairo because the Egyptians were more interested in the attitude of Allen who was just taking up his post than in Ambassador Caffrey, who was finishing his term. (See Eban to Eytan, WIA205, 8 December 1954, 93.01/2211/12.)
5. See No. 541.

532. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. 9 December 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2419/3

Summary

Tekoah writes about the possibility that the Egyptians might release the crew of the *Bat Galim*[1] without the ship and return the sailors across the armistice lines. He considers that the return of the crew without the ship constitutes a serious obstacle to Israel's political efforts. Steps must be taken to prevent this move, including ensuring that the Israel-Egypt Mixed Armistice Commission does not convene during the next few weeks. Furthermore, Israel should inform the United Nations administration that it considers the separation of the crew from its vessel a violation of the resolutions of the Mixed Armistice Commission and the Special Committee, and that the U.N. administration must not assist such a separation.[2] They should notify the Egyptians accordingly.

Notes

1. See Nos. 519 and 523 and n. 3.
2. On 10 December, Tekoah met with Burns on this matter, and asked him not to help in separating the crew from the ship and its return via the U.N. mechanism. Burns agreed on the basis of the fact that the matter was before the Security Council, and after the conversation he announced that he had given instructions to the Observers that in the event of the Egyptians contacting them about the return of the crew, they should reply that they could not act without a directive from the Security Council. (See two telegrams from Tekoah to the Israeli missions abroad, 12 December 1954, 130.09/2345/8.)

533. Rav Aluf M. Dayan [Tel Aviv] to Major-General E.L.M. Burns (Jerusalem). 10 December 1954

Notes

1. See No. 515.
2. The meeting between Burns and Dayan took place on 8 December.
3. Since at that time the consent of the parties regarding the signing of the agreement could not be obtained, Burns approached Israel and Jordan in February 1955 with a

proposal for an alternative procedure, whereby the two parties would give their consent to validate the arrangement about whose content there was no dispute, and upon receipt of affirmative answers from them, he would convene a meeting of the officers chosen for this function, in order to discuss the arrangements for the installation of a telephone line and other arrangements. He also suggested issuing a brief statement to the press. The wording of the agreement which was attached to Burns's letters was identical with the wording attached to No. 515. In place of the signatures of the two parties was written "Certified true copy of text verbally approved by both parties", and beneath it came Burns's signature.

Israel gave its agreement to the proposal on 16 February. The meeting took place on 18 April 1955 and the parties agreed that the agreement had come into effect. (See Burns to Eytan, 8 February 1955, Tekoah to Burns, 16 February 1955, Burns to Eytan, 18 April 1955, all in File 130.16/2948/17.)

534. Rav Aluf M. Dayan [Tel Aviv] to Major-General E.L.M. Burns (Jerusalem). 10 December 1954

Notes

1. The letter in File 130.02/2425/9.
2. See No. 499 and notes.
3. At a meeting with General Burns on 8 December, Dayan expressed opposition to proposals made in Colonel Brewster's letter. He stated that the system of observer posts and the method of guard patrols along the entire line in the Jerusalem area, as Brewster proposed, was not in keeping with the principles agreed upon in writing and verbally, whereby the observer posts and the guard patrols would be confined to points in which there was particular tension.

   Burns maintained that Jerusalem was a sensitive place and that this required an increased number of patrols and observations, but it was not intended that the Observers would guard the line but that they would move along it in order to assign responsibility for incidents. Dayan was opposed, and argued that if they decided that the details would assign responsibility for incidents, then in fact they were setting up a new body in addition to the Armistice Commissions. At Dayan's request Burns agreed to relay to him the list of incidents in November and to submit a new request based on this list. (See Shalev's report on the meeting between the chief of staff and Burns on 8 December 1954, 130.16/2947/6.)
4. Burns did in fact send in reply a report on the incidents in October and November. In the accompanying letter he added that the number of incidents called for visits and observer posts of the U.N. Observers at certain border areas, and suggested that the programme for patrols and observer posts be limited to the period between 13–26 December, at the end of which they would reconsider its necessity. In reply Dayan agreed to visits of the Observers to Musrara, Abu Tor and the Mandelbaum Gate. (See Burns to Dayan, 10 December 1954; Dayan to Burns, 13 December 1954, 130.16/2947/6.)

535. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Prime Minister. 10 December 1954

Coded Tel. 642; Inc.: 130.09/2345/4

Summary

Tsur reports on his meeting with Mendès France which covered many topics.[1]

1. The alliances in the Middle East: He stated that France, like Israel, objects to the creation of a united bloc of Arab states. In the meantime the Americans had abandoned this idea and the British are also no longer enthusiastic. If it should be raised again, France would support Israel's objection. On the other hand, he does not support Israel's objection to Iraq joining the alliance between Turkey and Pakistan, because this alliance is aimed against the U.S.S.R. These states do not border on Israel and Turkey's participation is a guarantee that it would not be turned against Israel.
2. The arming of the Arab states: He said that he considered this a danger to peace in the Middle East and an upsetting of the balance of forces.
3. France's attitude towards Israel: He said that the friendly attitude of France to Israel derives not only from the sympathy prevalent among various circles in the country, but also because of joint interests in the Middle East.

They also spoke about the Suez Canal issue and the Bat Galim episode, the Cairo trial, and economic matters. Concerning North African Jewry, he said that France had no intention of raising obstacles to the emigration of Jews, but care must be taken to ensure that the presence of the Jews remaining in those countries would not be prejudiced. Therefore no propaganda should be made and discretion maintained.[4]

Notes

1. The meeting took place on 9 December. A full report of the conversation, bearing the date 14 December 1954, is filed under 130.10/2539/15.
2. See No. 493.
3. See No. 529.
4. A few minutes after the meeting Mendès France rang Tsur and protested vehemently about a report appearing on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman in Jerusalem according to which he had said in his conversation with Eban in the United States that France was opposed to all the pacts in the Middle East, and encouraged Israel in its struggle against them. Mendès France claimed that he had not made the remarks attributed to him as published, and in any case it had been agreed that the contents of the conversation would remain strictly confidential.

He stated that he would have to issue a sharp denial. In response Sharett explained to Tsur that there had been no statement whatever from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning the content of the conversation, but only a denial saying that everything that had appeared in the press was nothing but journalistic speculation. The clarification was relayed to Mendès France when it was already too late to delay the publication of his protest. (See Tsur to the prime minister, 9 December 1954, 130.09/2345/4; Sharett to Tsur, Telegram 604, 9 December 1954, 130.09/2345/8.)

536. Editorial note

Opening of the Trial of the Israeli Sabotage Network in Egypt

On 11 December 1954, the trial opened in the Supreme Military Court in Cairo of the 13 Jews accused of spying for Israel and various acts of sabotage in Egypt. Two of the accused, Avraham Dar (John Darling), an intelligence officer who had set up the network and afterwards returned to Israel, and the commander of the network afterwards - Avraham Zeidenberg (Paul Frank), who had managed to escape to Europe after the discovery of the network, were sentenced in absentia. One of the accused, Max Bennet, an I.D.F. officer who had been sent by Israeli Intelligence to Egypt and who had only an indirect link with the network, committed suicide in his cell on 21 December. In the charge sheet it was stated that the members of the group had engaged in spying in Egypt and had transmitted reports to Israel. In addition they had laid incendiary bombs in cinemas, in the post office and in the offices of the American Information Service in Alexandria, with the aim of damaging relations between Egypt and the United States. The prosecutor demanded the imposition of the maximum penalty on the accused, i.e., the death penalty. The defence counsel's request to delay the trial so that he could prepare, was denied. All the accused pleaded not guilty, but a few of them admitted a part of the facts. The accused Marcelle (Victorinne) Ninio maintained that her statement in the course of the interrogation had been extracted by torture. In the courtroom were present the French and West German consuls, since among the accused there were a French and a West German citizen.

537. W. Eytan [Jerusalem] to the Israel Embassy in London. [13 December 1954][1]

Copy: 130.02/2420/2

Summary

Eytan cables about the report he received from Kosloff regarding negotiations with oil companies for the supply of Iranian oil to Israel.[2] It would seem that the refusal of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company to supply Iranian oil to Israel required Israel to approach the British Foreign Office. It should be remembered that at the time of the crisis regarding the supply of oil from Kuwait,[3] all the British oil companies made a united stand. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company argues that the supply of Iranian oil to Israel could have a negative effect on its standing in the Arab countries. Israel now finds itself in the strange situation when a company belonging to the British government is implementing the Arab boycott, even when the oil in question is not produced in Arab countries. Kosloff thinks that it would be best to take up the matter with Nutting, with whom the problem in Kuwait was discussed at the time.[4]

Notes

1. The date was fixed according to an accompanying letter in the file. This letter was taken by Gideon Rafael to Paris and relayed from Paris to London by telegram. (See telegram from the embassy in Paris to the embassy in London, 15 December 1954, 93.04/39/12.)
2. Kosloff reported that the Anglo-Iranian Company had announced that it could not commit itself to supply Iranian fuel to Israel for fear of Arab reactions: an alternative suggestion was formulated that the Shell Company would undertake to bring one trial shipment from Iran, and if the attempt was successful it would continue with this supply, and in any case it undertook to supply 200,000 tons at a fixed rate and with a certain discount, whether it brought the whole amount from Iran or not. Kosloff, and with him Shinnar and Margalit, recommended accepting this proposal, since better conditions could not be expected. In their view the fears of the British, who were involved in the negotiations, were sincere and not a pretext or ruse. (See telegram from Shinnar, Kosloff and Margalit to Eshkol, Sapir and Eytan, 3 December 1954. 130.09/2320/2.)
3. The reference is to the decision of the British oil companies to stop supplying Israel with oil originating in Kuwait. At the end of September 1953, Elath and Kosloff met with Nutting, the deputy British foreign secretary in an attempt to get the decision changed, and in Israel they presented a letter to the British embassy in November 1953. In reply the British government stated that it was not in its power to change the oil companies' decision. (See Vol. 8, Nos. 423, 527 and n. 3.)

4. Margalit, the economic adviser in the embassy in London, maintained in reply that the position of the British Foreign Office was complex, and that besides the Arab pressures, there was also the problem of relations with Iran, the British having made an undertaking to it to guarantee the marketing of the fuel it produced. He suggested that the appeal to the Foreign Office should take the form of a consultation based on mutual interest and not of a complaint or a demand, and to present them with a constructive solution. Such a solution in his opinion was to suggest to the British, who were interested in finding outlets for the Iranian oil markets which did not receive Arab oil, a kind of tripartite arrangement between Britain, Israel and Iran, whereby the Iranian oil would be marketed in Israel, and the sensible tactic for this purpose would be to concentrate all the activity around the Shell Company and to allow the Anglo-Iranian Company to remain in the background. (See Margalit's memorandum to the ambassador in London, 16 December 1954, 130.02/2420/2.)

538. R. Shiloah (Washington) to J. Herzog. 13 December 1954

Copy: 130.20/2480/6

Summary

Shiloah sums up the contacts and relations between Israel and the United States following upon Israel's efforts to change the direction of American policy. He considers that there had been progress to a certain extent in relations between the two countries as well as in Israel's standing, but no fundamental change. He proposes, therefore, that Israel put before the U.S. government an overall plan for Middle East policy. This plan should be directed mainly towards easing tension, strengthening the region from the point of view of stability of regimes, improvement of relations between the countries of the Middle East and the West and organization of regional defence.

In order to forestall trouble and to counteract pressure on Israel in matters regarding the borders and refugees, it would be advisable, in his opinion, to include a number of concessions to reduce tension. Among these should be an announcement of Israel's willingness to enter into negotiations on compensation for the refugees and arrangements for Jordanian imports and exports through Haifa port. In addition, he proposes drawing up a list of possible joint projects between Israel and the Arab states, and to declare Israel's readiness to implement them without making this conditional on Arab agreement to enter into peace negotiations. He believes that such a proposal would take the wind out of the sails of those making demands on

Israel concerning borders and refugees, and enable Israel to maintain its standing as a state seeking peace and advocating agreement on cooperation in the region.

Notes

1. See No. 497.
2. See No. 427, n. 3.
3. See No. 402.
4. See Nos. 382, 388.
5. No. 345.
6. See No. 396, n. 2.

539. W. Eytan (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassies in Washington, London and Paris. 13 December 1954

Coded Tel. 640; Outg.: 130.09/2312/8

Summary

Sharett instructs the three ambassadors to mount a campaign about the trial in Egypt.[1] The points of departure can be the false accusations that Israel is organizing subversion and plans to invade Egypt, denial of the charges against the prisoners and the fact that the confession by the prisoner Ninio had been extracted under torture. Insinuations should be made that the trial had been organized hastily in order to divert public opinion in the Arab countries from the anger generated as a result of the hanging of the members of the Moslem Brotherhood.[2] In addition to the campaign in the press, efforts should be made to obtain declarations and appeals by Jewish and other organizations and to ensure wide coverage of these activities.[3,4]

Notes

1. See No. 536 (Editorial Note)
2. See No. 530 and n. 1.
3. In his statement in the Knesset on 13 December, the prime minister said that the Israeli government vigorously rejected the false libels contained in the indictment of the Egyptian public prosecution which ascribed to the Israeli authorities atrocities and diabolic plots against the security and the international relations of Egypt. He added that Israel saw in the Jews accused of such serious crimes, of which they were totally innocent, victims of wild hostility to the State of Israel and the Jewish People, and called on all those who favoured peace, stability and normal relations

between nations to prevent a catastrophic perversion of justice. (See Divrei *Haknesset,* [Knesset Reports], fourth session of the Second Knesset, Vol. XVII, 13 December 1954, p. 306 [Hebrew].)

4. Eban and Shiloah were opposed to giving wide publicity to the steps to save those standing trial in Egypt. (See Eban's and Shiloah's telegrams to Eytan, Nos. 234, 237, 13 December 1954, 130.09/2310/12.) See also No. 540.

540. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 14 December 1954

Coded Tel. TNWA641; Outg.: 130.09/2312/8

Summary

Sharett cables final instructions for action to be taken to save the Jews imprisoned in Egypt, following two consultations in the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee.

The sole purpose at this stage is to save the lives of these people. The government[3] and American Jewry must be galvanized into action, all this with the least possible publicity. At the same time, efforts should be made to have suitable articles placed in major publications. Public action on a wide scale will be taken if death sentences are imposed. At this stage, mass rallies should not be held. Tension exists among the public on this question, and thus it is our intention to set up a public committee to bring influence to bear but not to organize mass public action.[4]

Notes

1. See No. 539 and n. 4.
2. See there, n. 3.
3. In a further telegram Eytan explained that the term "government" referred to the United States government (TNWA642, 16 December 1954, 130.09/2312/8).
4. Similar telegrams were also sent to London and Paris.

541. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 14 December 1954

Coded Tel. IW168; Outg.: 130.09/2310/8

Summary

Sharett cables Eban saying that it appears that so far the United States administration had done nothing regarding the prisoners in Egypt.[1] Allen had been impressed by what Sharett had told him, but he had not yet received a reply to the message sent to him in Cairo.[2] The message Blaustein had delivered was important, but it points up the fact that the American administration had not taken direct official action.[3] It should be made clear to them that lack of action is construed as lack of concern. He believes that Israel is entitled to a clear reply as to whether the United States is prepared to approach Cairo. Requests his opinion. Every day counts.[4]

Notes

1. See Nos. 530, 531.
2. On 12 December, Sharett relayed to Allen in Cairo, via the American ambassador in Israel, a message in which he expressed deep concern regarding the developments in the matter of the trial in Egypt, requesting Allen to let him know as soon as possible if he could do something in this regard and how he saw the chances. (See message to Allen and accompanying letter to Lawson, 12 December 1954, 130.02/2453/20.) Allen's reply – see No. 554.
3. On 12 December a telegram from Blaustein was sent via the Department of State to Riad with an urgent appeal concerning the trial in Egypt, stressing that to the best of his knowledge this was also his government's position. Shimoni, who reported this to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, added that although this emphasis of his did not officially commit the United States Government, it was reinforced and approved by the fact that his telegram had been sent through the official channels of the United States Government and delivered by Byroade and Caffrey. (See Eban to Eytan, WIA227, 10 December 1954; Shimoni to Eytan, WIA230, 12 December 1954, 93.01/2211/12.)
4. Eban replied that the next day he would ask Murphy if the Department of State had acted, and if not – whether it intended to act and when. He would also ask if he had any information about Allen's action. (See Eban to Sharett, WIA245, 14 December 1954, 93.01/2211/12.)

542. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to M. Orbach (Paris). 15 December 1954

Notes

1. See No. 510 and n. 7. Orbach arrived in Paris at the request of Rafael on his way to his second visit to Cairo in order for Rafael to furnish him with an up-to-date briefing based on a report on the latest developments through his Egyptian contact, Abd al-Rahman Sadiq, who was also due to arrive in Paris from Cairo. (See Rafael to Avner, Telegram 754, 12 December 1954, 130.15/3754/11.)
2. Sharett's dispatch in the document presented here reached Paris late and because of the need to decode it was brought to the airfield only after Orbach's flight had taken off; therefore it was not delivered to him. In any event Rafael reported, Orbach was briefed and had carefully written everything down, and he was intent on succeeding in his mission. (Telegram to Sharett, 16 December 1954, 130.09/2345/4.) In the end, Sharett's dispatch was delivered, with several changes, through Sadiq – see No. 559.

   Orbach was apparently briefed by means of a document that had been prepared in Paris, bearing the date 15 December 1954, entitled "Brief for Mr. Maurice Orbach". This document brings an analysis of Egyptian policy, the trial affair, the *Bat Galim* detention and freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal. It concluded with a seven-point short term program:

   1. Not imposing grave sentences in the trial in Cairo.
   2. Release of the *Bat Galim* and enabling the ship to proceed northwards with its crew and cargo.
   3. Non-interference with all cargoes to and from Israel.
   4. Cessation of hostile propaganda and political warfare, and non-intervention in internal matters.
   5. Cessation of border incidents.
   6. Establishing direct contact through authorized representatives who will work out the details of these arrangements.
   7. High-level and secret exchanges of ideas on the future relations between Egypt and Israel.

   (The document in File 130.15/3754/1.) See also Nos. 553, 562.

543. A. Eban (Washington) to W. Eytan. 15 December 1954

Coded Tel. WIA250; Outg: 93.01/2211/12

Summary

Eban reports that Blaustein had been informed by the Department of State that his message had been received by Nasser,[1] who stated that the trial was being held according to the regular procedure which applies to Egyptian

citizens. The Department of State deduces from the wording of the reply that the judgment of the accused is not that which applies to foreign spies whose fate is predetermined. Eban disagreed with this, and told Blaustein that he considers this wording as no more than a polite confirmation of receipt of his cable and that action must be continued. A reply had been received that day from the Department of State on the specific questions in cable No. 245.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 541.
2. See ibid, n. 4. In view of the information in the document presented here, the embassy retracted its request to see Murphy. In addition to this information Bergus said that Caffrey had stated that he had appealed to Minister of Foreign Affairs Fawzi who said that the position of the United States was clear to him and he would convey its recommendations to Nasser. Bergus stressed unofficially, on the strength of reports received in the Department of States that the accused had been given a bold and effective defence, and that four of the accused had again confessed to having set the United States Information Bureau on fire. (See Shimoni to Eytan, WIA258, 15 December 1954, 93.01/2211/12.)

544. Sh. Kaddar (Prague) to the East European Division. 15 December 1954

Coded Tel. 563; Inc.: 130.09/2343/4

Summary

Kaddar had been received by the Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia to whom he submitted the Note from President Ben- Zvi.[1] In the course of the ensuing conversation, Kaddar broached subjects pending between the two countries, including those he had raised at a previous meeting in March.[2] The Foreign Minister replied that Ornstein's release was the beginning of the process and that a decision in principle to release Oren had been taken, but the timing is under consideration. A positive decision had been taken concerning the reunification of families[3] in hundreds of cases and the problems are purely administrative. As for trade relations, preparations are being made and he hopes shortly to submit a proposal for the meeting of two delegations of experts to examine the demands made in the past by both parties in order to develop normal trade relations in the future.

Notes

1. This refers to President Ben-Zvi's Note to the Czech President Zápotocky. In his Note, President Ben- Zvi expressed satisfaction over the release of Shimon Ornstein and disappointment that the request for the release of Mordechai Oren had been turned down in the meantime. (The Note, dated 29 November 1954, in File 130.11/2513/5.) Oren and Ornstein were arrested at the end of 1951 on charges of spying; Ornstein was sentenced to life imprisonment and Oren to 15 years in jail. In December 1953, President Ben-Zvi appealed to President Zápotocky in a Note requesting him to respond positively to the request for a pardon that the wives of the two prisoners had submitted (See ibid.). Ornstein was released at the end of October 1954, whereas Oren was only released in May 1956.
2. On this date, Kaddar presented his letter of accreditation for the post of chargé d'affaires to the foreign minister of Czechoslovakia, and used the occasion to raise four subjects for discussion: the release of Oren and Ornstein, the reunification of families (as concrete examples he referred to the cases of two women), the development of trade relations and the fostering of cultural contacts. (See Kaddar's telegram to the East European Division, No. 404, 10 March 1954, 130.09/2343/4.)
3. In their meeting on 17 November, Kalicka, the Director of the Asia Department, informed Kaddar that a basic decision had been reached regarding granting exit permits to 460 persons within the framework of family reunification, but the implementation was delayed for the present because of technical problems in the Ministry of the Interior (See Kaddar's telegram to the East European Division, No. 553, 17 November 1954, there.)

545. E. Sasson (Rome) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 16 December 1954

Coded Tel. 776; Inc.: 130.09/2356/6

Summary

Sasson reported on a meeting between Astorre Mayer, the Israel consul in Milan, and the Egyptian consul there. Mayer, who had previously been briefed, raised the matter of the trial in Egypt. The Egyptian consul stated emphatically that none of the accused would be executed. Regarding political issues between Israel and Egypt, he said that all the issues, including freedom of navigation, refugees, the border situation and the economic boycott could be resolved in the course of time on condition that Israel would understand the internal situation in Egypt and not act provocatively. The Egyptian consul gave the impression that he was interested in a follow-up of this conversation with Sasson.[1]

Note

1. At an additional meeting with a member of the Jewish community in Milan the Egyptian consul, Ahmed Hilmi Ibrahim, requested to inform Mayer, the honorary consul of Israel in Milan, that according to reports received by the Egyptian embassy in Rome, the death sentence would not be imposed on any of the accused and none of them would be executed. He gave the impression that he was interested to meet with Sasson. Sasson replied that he had no objection to the meeting, but from the tactical point of view it was desirable not to act hastily and not to evince great interest in this. (See Sasson to Eytan, Telegram 791, 22 December 1954, 130.09/2356/6.)

546. J. Tsur (Paris) to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 16 December 1954

Orig.: 130.10/2530/7

Summary

Tsur reports on the meeting of Rafael and Divon with Maillard concerning France's Middle East policy. Rafael stressed the increasing awareness in Israel of the need to reinforce the 1950 Three Power Declaration by an unambiguous official interpretation that would state that the Powers would oppose any forcible change in the status quo in the Middle East. Maillard was not particularly enthusiastic about this, stating that he does not believe in the validity of political declarations that could in themselves lead to changes in the attitude of the Arab states. The reconfirmation of the Three Power Declaration could raise obstacles to the increased provision of French arms to Israel because France could be forced to act within the framework requiring greater balance of supply than it had done in the past. The main thing, he said was that Israel take steps in the United States to bring about a change in the American policy of conciliating the Arabs. France's Middle East policy is directed to preventing the arming of the Arab states, alliances between these countries and their making of joint pacts. Tsur states that Maillard's reservations about the reconfirmation of the Three Power Declaration seem to him to be most reasonable and Israel should pay attention to them.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 454 and n. 1.
2. Najar, who reacted to this conversation, was indignant over Rafael's focussing during the conversation on the need to renew the Three Power Declaration, which meant retreat and political minimalism, which must surely have disappointed Maillard. Rafael, as had been agreed, should have stressed Israel's opposition to Iraq's joining the pact between Turkey and Pakistan, especially in view of the tendency revealed by Mendès France in conversation with Eban and Tsur, to agree to Iraq's joining it. (See Najar to the minister of foreign affairs, 22 December 1954, 130.02/2403/9.)

547. Meeting: M. Sharett – I. White (Tel Aviv, 17 December 1954)

Notes

1. Hoover instructed the embassy to convey the message to Prime Minister Sharett in response to Sharett's conversation with Ambassador Lawson on 10 December. In that conversation Sharett said that Israel understood that the Americans and the British were working in Cairo in connection with the *Bat Galim*, and it was prepared to wait a few days until the Egyptian intention became clear. However, it had to be clear that only the release of the ship and its crew and cargo, and continuation of its journey northwards would satisfy Israel, and any other solution would be unacceptable to it and it would demand the convening of the Security Council. (See Sharett to the embassy in Washington, TNWA637, 12 December 1954, 130.09/2312/8.)
2. See No. 537.
3. Following the message and conversation, Sharett instructed Eban to demand the convening of the Security Council. (See Telegrams to Eban, IW184, 18 December 1954; IW184, 20 December 1954, 130.02/2310/8.) See also No. 558.

548. Y. Shimoni (Washington) to W. Eytan. 17 December 1954

549. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett and J. Herzog. 17 December 1954

Coded Tel. WIA267; Outg: 93.012210/20

Summary

Eban reports on information that had reached him secretly from a senior official, that Shuckburgh's report on his visit to the Middle East had arrived and he expressed deep concern about the situation in the region and includes some proposals.[1] The line he proposes to take is territorial concessions by Israel in a restricted area in which a limited number of refugees would be settled. The Department of State is disappointed because such proposals have been made in the past and there is no way to enforce them. The secretary of state had decided to make this matter a major concern of his agenda. The idea he was contemplating was to make a statement, such as that made by Eden,[2] on the intervention of the United States to put down aggression, with action to be taken by Congress to reinforce such a statement.

Israel's appearance at the atomic energy debate[4] made a tremendous impression on the Department of State. The senior official advised Israel to continue to press for membership in the scientific committee and to contact the official appointed by the president for determining the location of atomic reactors.

Notes

1. See No. 498 and n. 1. Report on the visit see Notes on Arab-Israel Dispute, 15 December 1954, PRO, FO371/11095. More on the visit see No. 565.
2. See No. 454 and n. 1.
3. See No. 530 and n. 4.
4. This is a reference to Eban's speech on 15 November 1954 in the First (political) Committee of the U.N. General Assembly within the framework of a debate on international cooperation for the development of the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Eban, like other participants, spoke about Israel's achievements in the sphere of the atom, on its research capability, and its ability to contribute to the training of scientists from other countries. At the summation of the General Assembly debate it was decided to set up an international atomic energy agency and to convene, in the first half of 1955, an international scientific conference sponsored by the U.N. on the peaceful uses of atomic energy. (See *GAOR, Ninth Session, First Committee,* 707th-725th Meetings, 5-23 November 1954, pp. 289-387)

   The minister of defence, and other officials responsible for the atomic development in Israel, were not happy with Eban's remarks. In their opinion his remarks had gone much further than desirable, and also were inexact in describing

the achievements and atomic potential of Israel. Eban replied that the information he had given in his speech was contained in telegrams that he had received from the Division of International Institutions or in scientific literature. In addition it was clear that the speech had markedly increased Israel's chances of being included in the international agency that was due to be established. (See Eytan to Eban, IW82, 19 November 1954, 130.09/2310/8; Eban to Eytan, WI26, 21 November 1954, 93.01/2210/22.)

5. The reference is to the assistance extended by Israel to the Netherlands in the U.N. Assembly in the Irian affair (Dutch New Guinea) See Nos. 384, 512.
6. See No. 396, n. 2.
7. See No. 488 and n. 3.

550. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 17 December 1954

Coded Tel WIA268; Outg: 93.01/2211/12

Summary

Eban reports on a conversation with Hoover in which he brought him up to date on developments in the weeks since their previous meeting. He said that factors causing Israel concern have not changed and Arab hostility is continuing. Israel's hopes for decisive action by the Western Powers have not materialized. In the light of the situation he had drawn three conclusions:

1. Deliberations that had been ongoing for several months between Israel and the United States must be brought to a conclusion. These should include the balance of arms, actions to be taken against aggression, non-discrimination against Israel in security arrangements, and proposals for military aid.

2. After the security issue had been resolved, Israel would be prepared to continue to discuss with the United States improvement of relations and the reduction of tension within the region.

3. In the meantime steps should be taken against deterioration in the situation and this requires a clear American stand on current issues, such as the *Bat Galim* episode and the trial in Egypt.

Eban expanded on point 2, and stated that in his talks with Shuckburgh and Allen[2] it was seen that, together with their support and sincere desire for peace, there was a routine continuation of proposals for the return of refugees or territories that would lead nowhere. Such proposals only cause the neglect of more promising avenues to be followed, such as those proposed by Israel concerning compensation for refugees[3] or the possibility of access to the sea for Jordan.[4]

Hoover replied by saying that the secretary of state would return shortly and would continue his personal involvement. United States' military policy in the Middle East would continue in the direction of maintaining Israel's security. They would also continue their efforts in Cairo to prevent further incidents as well as ensuring freedom of navigation, but he requested that Israel refrain from placing Egypt in the glare of publicity. As for the trial, the American embassy had made an informal statement that a death sentence would adversely affect the security situation in the region.[5]

Notes

1. See No. 520, n. 1.
2. See No. 498 and No. 530, n. 4.
3. See No. 488 and n. 3.
4. See No. 396, n. 2.
5. Compare Jernegan's report on this conversation – *FRUS, 1954-56,* Vol. IX (part 1) No. 935.

551. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 17 December 1954

Coded Tel. 182; Outg: 130.09/2310/8

Summary

The Division replies to the Embassy's cables concerning the trade delegation to China.[1] In his talks in Israel, White had asked Herzog about the delegation and quoted from reports on talks by embassy personnel with officials in the economic section of the Department of State. Herzog replied that the idea stemmed from attempts to expand exports and had no political intent. The purpose of the delegation was purely exploratory and no date of departure had yet been set.[3]

Notes

1. In Telegrams W203 and W214 from 7-8 December (In File 92.01/2211/12) Shimoni reported that in a routine conversation at the Department of State with the Economic Defense staff on their own initiative they had brought up the issue of the Israeli trade delegation to China (see No. 472), and explained that the regulations governing supervision on the property of foreign nationals were liable to be applied to all the members of the delegation, namely, that all their assets in the United States were

liable to be frozen, and all their financial and commercial transactions banned, unless they obtained a special license from the secretary of the treasury. In an unofficial conversation, Bergus confirmed these remarks, but hinted that in this case, presumably, sanctions would not be applied against the delegation members. At the same time, he added that in the atmosphere reigning the United States, such a delegation's trip was liable to have a damaging impact on Israel's public relations and it would cast a shadow on Israel's hitherto exemplary compliance with the Battle Act. (The Battle Act prohibited the export of strategic goods to the Soviet Union and East European states.)

Telegram W259 from Eban – see No. 552 and n. 4.

2. See No. 502 and n. 6.
3. See No. 579.

552. D. Lewin (Jerusalem) to D. Hacohen (Rangoon). 17 December 1954

Orig.: 93.13/226/3

Summary

Levin writes about the trade delegation to China. He hopes that the date will be set quickly, before the United States changes its attitude towards China.[1] The only interest China has in Israel will continue so long as the Americans, on a worldwide scale, and the Arabs on a Middle Eastern scale, reject them. If Israel does not succeed in establishing relations very soon it will miss the opportunity to do so. He adds that it would be useful to inform his American counterpart about the delegation, more or less along the lines he had followed with Russell while he was in Israel and during their talks in the United States.[5]

Notes

1. In fact, in two meetings, on 23 and 27 December, the Chinese chargé d'affaires gave David Hacohen his government's approval for the visit of the delegation to China in mid-January, on condition that it would be called a trade mission and not trade delegation, in order to indicate that its visit was to learn about the conditions and problems and not for immediate trade transactions. He added that his government intended to send a reciprocal delegation to Israel. (See Hacohen to the Asia Division, 24 and 28 December 1954, 93.13./226/3.)
2. See Telegrams, Eban to Eytan, WI43, 24 November 1954, WI50, 26 November 1954, both in File 93.01/2210/22,
3. See No. 551.

4. The telegram W259, 15 December 1954, in File 93.01/2211/12.
5. This refers to David Hacohen's meeting with the American chargé d'affaires Russell on 23 September in Israel, which was designed to mitigate the possible impact in the United States regarding the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dissatisfaction with the Israel mission to the U.N. vote on the issue of the admission of the representative of the People's Republic of China to the U.N. (See No. 385.) At that meeting Hacohen had welcomed the announcement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs disapproving of the position of Israel's mission, and noted that without it he would have found it hard to continue with his work and to hold contacts with representatives of Asian states in Burma, contacts which all enhanced Western interests and were much appreciated by the representatives of the United States. (See United States Division, TNWA551, 23 September 1954, 130.09/2312/8.)
6. Two paragraphs, dealing with the travel arrangements and the composition of the delegation were not printed here.

553. G. Rafael (Paris) to M. Sharett. 18 December 1954

Coded Tel. 677; Inc.: 130.09/2345/4

Summary

Rafael cables that his Egyptian friend,[1] Abd al-Rahman Sadiq, told him during the latter's visit to Paris, that he had met with Nasser who had instructed him in the presence of three members of his Cabinet to go to Paris and state that the Revolutionary Council had no aggressive plans against Israel and wished to come to an arrangement by peaceful means. Because of the internal situation, Egypt is unable to take any comprehensive overt and official steps, but is prepared to discuss any practical proposal. Sadiq gave details about the situation within the Revolutionary Council and about relations with the British and Americans, which according to him were satisfactory. However, Nasser had no plans to join one of the Western defence alliances, despite what he was saying to the Powers, and the Egyptians had to concentrate on expelling the British.

As for the *Bat Galim*, he said that even if we were to assume that the Egyptians had staged the episode, public opinion considers it as Israeli aggression and any concession on their part would be construed as submission to Western pressure and as an affront to the national honour. This factor applies also to any concession regarding the trial. After Divon pressed him on this matter, he admitted that Nasser had not assessed correctly the grave dangers arising from the trial. In his opinion no decision had yet been taken, but the matter was extremely serious. He believed that threats in connection with this trial would only be detrimental. He proposed

that the Israeli prime minister send a message to Nasser, based on his statement about his intentions to reach an arrangement, and to stress the importance of the outcome of the trial as regards Israel-Egypt relations.

He had that day received Israel's proposals for reducing tension, as earlier submitted to Orbach.[3] Following are his opinions:

Incidents – as far as he knows Nasser believes that incidents along the border are a normal phenomenon in the existing situation and their significance should not be exaggerated.

Passage through the Canal – his comment concerning the Israeli proposal that cargoes destined for Israel should pass through the Canal in neutral vessels in exchange for a temporary respite in dispatching Israeli vessels, was that such a proposal was acceptable but he would have to consult about the matter of oil. His reaction to the statement that Israel could agree to a temporary arrangement on condition that the *Bat Galim* would be permitted to continue its voyage to its destination was to ask if Israel would exploit this as a precedent. He was told that Israel did not require any such precedent because its rights were guaranteed by the Security Council resolution.[4]

The trial – he interpreted Israel's proposal as a request that the handing down of a death sentence be prevented.

Cessation of propaganda – he explained the practical difficulties involved in effective and rapid guidance of public opinion in his country.

High-level meeting – he asked if this meant members of the Council or the government.

Sadik must return quickly and thus Rafael requests a cabled reply.[6] In any event he would do his utmost to keep him there until Orbach's return.

Notes

1. On the previous day, 17 December, Rafael informed that "Divon's friend", Abd al-Rahman Sadiq, who had arrived in Paris only the day before, after Orbach had left for Cairo (see No. 543, n. 1), had come with the permission and briefing of Nasser and two other junta officers, with the knowledge of Salih Salim, but not after having consulted with him. (Rafael's telegram to Sharett, Telegram 674, 17 December 1954, 130.15/3754/11.)
2. This almost certainly refers to the telegram sent to Cairo on 8 December 1954, at the instruction of Rafael, to Abd al-Rahman Sadiq, the director of the press department in the office of Salih Salim, the Minister of National Instruction, in which Sadiq was requested to come urgently to Paris for a meeting. (See telegrams from Rafael to the embassy in Paris, No. 600, 8 December 1954, 130.09/2345/8; from the embassy in Paris to Rafael, Telegram 640, 9 December 1954, 130.09/2345/4.)
3. See No. 542, n. 2.
4. Sharett asked to clarify whether the meaning of the proposal in this paragraph was: (a) that the *Bat Galim* would proceed to Haifa, (b) that Israel had committed itself to a temporary lull in sending more Israeli ships, (c) that the Egyptians had agreed to

the passage of tankers. He received the reply: "We have set as condition for the lull the continuation of the *Bat Galim* journey to Haifa and the passage of oil. We have not yet received an answer", (See exchange of telegrams, Sharett to the embassy in Paris, Telegram 668, 19 December 1954; Rafael to Sharett, Telegram 686, 20 December 1954, 130.02/2435/20.)

5. No. 542.
6. See No. 555 and notes.

554. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 18 December 1954

Notes

1. See No. 541 and n. 2.
2. In a conversation with Byroade on 14 December Engel, the president of the American-Jewish Committee, was told that the Americans had put pressure on Nasser and others regarding the matter of the trial. They mentioned their prisoners in China and requested lenient sentences. (See Herlitz's telegrams to Eytan, NWT14, NWT15, 14 December 1954, 93.01/2211/12.)
3. Eban replied that he agreed to the proposal to activate the president and would begin preparations for this. (His telegram to Sharett, WIA274, 20 December 1954.)

555. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to G. Rafael (Paris). 19 December 1954

Notes

1. The document presented here is the text that Sharett suggested sending to Nasser to be conveyed by Sadiq – see No 553. And indeed the wording is similar, with certain alterations, to the message that was supposed to have been given through Orbach (see No. 542) and to the message which was in the end delivered by Sadiq – No. 559.
2. The next day Sharett gave instructions to omit the words: "against a group of hapless and helpless Jews". (See telegram to the embassy in Paris, TP506, 20 December 1954, 130.02/2453/20.)
3. See No. 556.

556. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to G. Rafael (Paris). 20 December 1954

Coded Tel. 679; Outg.: 130.09/2345/8

Summary

Sharett cables to Rafael that his formulation has not yet been received in full.[1] In any event he objects to a message addressed to him [Rafael] at present because of the artificial nature of such a message and its non-persuasive effect. He prefers sending a direct personal message in accordance with No. 504,[2] with the corrections he had made in the meantime.[3]

Notes

1. The reference is to the text of the message suggested by Rafael, the format of which was a message from Sharett addressed to Rafael, in order that it should be relayed to Nasser. (See Telegram 680, 20 December 1954, 130.02/2453/20, draft dated 19 December 1954 in File 130.15/3754/11). Rafael explained that the message had been composed on the basis of Sharett's first and second suggestions (see No. 553) and worded bearing in mind the atmosphere in relations as had been expressed in the conversation with Sadiq, Nasser's emissary. "We can under no circumstances debase ourselves and beg, nor admit the guilt of the boys even by a hint, nor to dispute the matter of guilt. In the case of the Canal, we have taken into account the nature of the practical proposals which I have relayed as agreed upon, and therefore we have adopted a businesslike wording without omitting the formal right." (See telegram from Rafael to Sharett, No. 679, 20 December 1954, 130.02/2453/20.)
2. No. 555.
3. Ibid., n. 2. Rafael and Divon agreed that Sharett was right, but begged him to delete any nuance of asking for mercy, and on no account to raise the problem of guilt. (Telegram 689, 20 December 1954, 130.02/2453/20.) The message that was finally delivered see No. 559.

557. Y. Tekoah (Jerusalem) to the Israel Permanent Mission to the United Nations. 20 December 1954

Coded Tel. 649; Outg: 130.09/2339/1

Summary

The director-general had received Burns who reported on his meetings in Syria. He said that he intended to submit a report on the situation in the demilitarized zone in consequence of problems raised by the Syrians. He mentioned the episodes of the Arabs of al-Baqra,[1] Nuqeib, the village of Tawafiq and fishing rights in Lake Tiberias. The director-general explained Israel's attitude to these matters and stated that if it were his intention to submit a report to the Security Council, it should include matters about which Israel is concerned. These include the Bnot Yaaqov Bridge, and Syria's seizure of the entire east bank of the Jordan River in the central demilitarized zone. It was agreed that Israel would send him a letter detailing its complaints.[2]

Notes

1. In his letter of 18 December (130.16/2953/11), Burns referred to the Arabs of al-Baqra and al-Ghannama in the demilitarized zone south of Lake Hula. He asked that until the border between Israel and Syria was finally fixed and the status of the villages determined, Israel should not exert economic or other pressure on them to cross to Syria or force them to accept for themselves the status of the other Arabs inside Israel. It should, on the other hand, enable them to lead an honest existence, including the sale of crops, purchase of commodities, education and health services.
2. See the report on the director-general's conversation with General Burns on 20 December 1954, 130.16/2953/11 and Eytan's letter to Burns, 27 December 1954, ibid.

558. A. Eban (New York) to the President of the Security Council (New York). 20 December 1954

Note

1. See No. 547 and n. 3. Published as U.N. Document S/3333.

559. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Paris. 21 December 1954

Notes

1. See Nos. 555 and 556 and notes.
2. On the same day Rafael replied to the telegram: "Fine, will be conveyed in an hour". (Telegram to Sharett, No. 690, 21 December 1954, 130.02/2453/20). Nasser's dispatch in reply – see No. 576.

560. A. Eban (Washington) to M. Sharett. 21 December 1954

Coded Tel. WIA285; Outg: 93.01/2211/12

Summary

Eban reports on his meeting with the Office of United Nations affairs in the Department of State concerning Israel's request to convene the Security Council on the *Bat Galim* episode.[1] The main news was their explicit statement that the United States demanded that Egypt permit the vessel to proceed northward, and they would be satisfied with nothing less than this. He is of the opinion that it would be best to allow them to proceed so that they could not claim that Israel had caused their efforts to fail, on condition that it is made clear that the vessel be allowed to travel north. He requests Sharett's agreement to this line as a condition for postponing the session until the beginning of January.[3]

Notes

1. At the meeting with Popper, the director of U.N. Affairs in the Department of State, in the presence of Bergus and Ludlow, on 21 December, Meroz and Erell raised Israel's demand for the convening of the Security Council concerning the *Bat Galim* episode. (See No. 558). The Americans vigorously rejected this demand and said that the convening would interfere with their direct efforts, as they had made it clear to Egypt that nothing less than the continuation of the voyage to Haifa would satisfy them and that they preferred a practical outcome to a moral resolution, which was liable to meet with a Soviet veto. They also pointed out that the composition of the Security Council in January would be more amenable. (See Telegram WIA284, 21 December 1954, 93.01/2211/12.)
2. See No. 547.
3. Sharett agreed to Eban's suggestion and instructed him to meet with a high-ranking official and inform him of Israel's readiness to wait until January, but with the

understanding that the delay was intended to allow sufficient time to obtain the continuation of the voyage northwards. He added that in his view the American fear of the veto was only a pretext and in fact they were loath to have to condemn Egypt, something which would be unavoidable if the debate were resumed. Consequently, Israel should insist on the convening of the Council in January. (Sharett to Eban, TNWA651, 22 December 1954, 130.09/2312/8.)

Eban did in fact meet with Key and Ludlow on 22 December, and informed them of Israel's agreement to postpone the convening of the Council until 3 January. In the meeting it was explained to him that the United States agreed with Israel that they must work to ensure that the *Bat Galim* sailed northwards. It was agreed that the Security Council would convene on 3 January and until then the Americans would continue to work diligently in Egypt in favour of the solution of the northwards voyage. (See Eban to the United States Division, WIA296, 22 December 1954, 93.01/2211/12.) See also No. 570 and n. 1.

561. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the United States Division. 21 December 1954

Coded Tel WIA291; Outg: 93.01/2211/12

Summary

The embassy reports on Shiloah's meeting with Jernigan. They discussed the recent delivery of U.S. arms to Iraq.[1] Shiloah reiterated Israel's strong objection to the arming of Iraq. Jernigan said that he had no details of this particular delivery, but according to the agreed schedule, Iraq would receive this year only a small portion of the consignment and most of it consisted of light arms and vehicles. Shiloah said that arming the Arabs without a defence agreement with Israel would create turmoil in Israeli public opinion. They discussed also the rumours concerning the Arab League. Jernigan reassured Shiloah that the U.S. had not changed its position regarding the League and had no intention to make it the cornerstone of a regional defence arrangement.

Note

1. The meeting took place following press reports on the arrival of the first consignment (on 19 December) of American arms to Iraq in accordance with the military assistance agreement signed between the two states in April 1954. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs it was decided that a political and public offensive concerning this matter needed to be launched. In addition to the meeting referred to, Lourie met with the British ambassador on 22 December and Eytan with the American ambassador on 23 December. (See Lourie to the Israel embassy in

London, Telegram 798, 23 December 1954, 130.09/2320/1; Eytan's report, 23 December 1954, 130.02/2415/1.) It was also decided to send a Note to the United States government – see No. 580.

562. G. Rafael (London) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 22 December 1954

Coded Tel. LA203; Outg: 130.15/3754/111

Summary

In a personal cable to the minister of foreign affairs, Rafael sends a first report on Orbach's mission. A full report on the mission will be sent during the week.[2]

Orbach was received by Nasser immediately on his arrival. Nasser thanked the prime minister of Israel for his courtesy. He was concerned at the situation in Syria, and less so about Israel, with whom he wished to live in peace. He would pass on to his colleagues the message he had received from Israel and would reply within three days. In the meantime he asked Orbach to meet with Sabri. Orbach handed him [Sabri] a memorandum that would serve as a basis for discussion with Nasser. Rafael had seen this memorandum which reflected the Note he himself had given Orbach in Paris.[4]

When Orbach arrived for his meeting with Nasser on 19 December, he was told that Nasser was ill and he would meet with Sabri who was authorized to give him Nasser's reply. Following are the points of this reply:

1. Nasser asks that his thanks be conveyed to Sharett.
2. In the matter of the trial, he would do his utmost to ensure there would be no inflammatory sentence, but it must be remembered that the accused had acted for a foreign intelligence service.
3. The *Bat Galim* would be released to its captain, but regarding the continuation of its voyage – action would be taken in the same way that the Israelis had dealt with the vessel Samir.[5]
4. As for free navigation, he agreed to the passage of all cargoes, except military equipment, in non-Israeli vessels. He could not agree to the passage of oil, unless the destination was not stated as Israel.
5. They were ready for the mutual cessation of hostile propaganda.
6. They would do their utmost to prevent border incidents, also on a mutual basis.

7. They agreed to high-level talks, proposed they be held in Paris and insisted on secrecy.

Rafael proposes sending a cable of appreciation to Orbach.[6] He stresses the need for secrecy as in point 7.

Notes

1. The wording presented here is based on a handwritten draft prepared in the embassy in Paris. In File 130.02/2453/20 there is also a typewritten text.
2. The full report is appended to Orbach's letter to Sharett from 28 December, in File 130.15/3754/11.
3. See No 542 and n. 2.
4. The memorandum is included in Orbach's full report (pp. 6-7), see n. 2 above.
5. See No. 523 and n. 1.
6. On 25 December, Sharett instructed Elath to convey to Orbach his sincere appreciation for having taken upon himself such a difficult assignment, and for the responsible and skilful manner in which he had carried it out. (Telegram to Elath, No. 225, 25 December 1954, 130.02/2453/21.) On 1 January 1955, Sharett cabled directly to Orbach and asked him to undertake an additional journey to Cairo in order to be present there when the sentences were announced. (The telegram in File 130.15/3754/11.)

563. Editorial Note

The Capture by the Syrians of an Israeli Intelligence Unit; the Interception of a Syrian Passenger Plane.

On the night between 8-9 December, a unit of five Israeli soldiers set out to deal with a listening device connected to telephone lines in Syrian territory. On 11 December, Radio Damascus broadcasted that 5 Israeli soldiers who had crossed the lines had exchanged fire with Syrian forces, surrendered and were taken prisoner. On 12 January 1955, the Mixed Armistice Commission adopted two resolutions on this matter. One stated that the operation was a grave violation of the Armistice Agreement and Israel was held responsible for it. In the second resolution the Commission called for the return of the captives to Israel as soon as possible. On 13 January 1955, Uri Ilan one of the prisoners, committed suicide in his cell in Damascus. His body was returned to Israel the same day. The four other soldiers were returned only in March 1956, in exchange for 40 Syrian prisoners.

On 12 December 1954, a Syrian civilian passenger plane flying in Israeli air space was forced by two Israeli planes to land at Lod airfield. The plane was on its way from Damascus to Cairo with 5 passengers, 4 Syrians and an

American, who was immediately released, and 5 crew members. The plane, its crew and the rest of the passengers were released within two days.

At the Government meeting on 19 December, the Minister of Defence Lavon stated that the instruction to intercept a Syrian military plane if it entered Israeli air space, was given in order to prevent the killing of the five captive soldiers in Syria, or some other complication. When it became clear that the soldiers were in Syrian hands and alive - the plane was released. At that same government meeting, Prime Minister Sharett reported on a memorandum which had been received from the American embassy on 18 December containing a sharp criticism of the interception of the plane. He said that he had heaved a sigh of relief when the plane was released, and despite the fact that he had understood the considerations from the outset, and in retrospect, he asserted that "once and for all we have to decide whether we are a state or not. We cannot as a state employ means which non-sovereign organizations can employ".

564. Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Defence. 22 December 1954

Copy: CZA A245/195

Summary

The prime minister writes concerning the interception of the Syrian plane.[1] There was no justification whatsoever for intercepting the plane, and after Israel had blundered, it should have released the plane as rapidly as possible and not continue to detain it and interrogate its passengers. This action was not only a breach of military discipline, but also showed narrow-mindedness and lack of foresight on the part of the senior military. They seem to think that the State of Israel should act according to the laws of the jungle. He had no cause to question the factual argument of the U.S. Department of State that the action taken by Israel is unprecedented in international behaviour. Conclusions should be drawn from this incident, action against civilian airplanes should be prohibited and reconnaissance flights over territories outside Israel as well as beyond its territorial waters should cease.

Note

1. See Editorial Note above.

565. E. Elath (London) to A. Lourie. 22 December 1954

Coded Tel. 332; Outg.: 93.04/40/17

Summary

Elath reports on his meeting with Shuckburgh who gave him his impressions of his tour of the Middle East.[1] He was impressed by the instability and the serious situation existing, especially in Jordan and Syria. On the other hand, the regime in Egypt is strong and aware of the direction in which it is headed. His conclusions for the future are that the Western Powers should continue to strengthen the realization among the countries of the region that violation of the peace for any reason whatsoever would be met with strong resistance on their part. At the same time, the region should be strengthened in the social, economic and cultural aspects in order to stabilize it politically. The Western Powers should encourage any signs of regional cooperation, including cooperation in regional defence. He did not elaborate on this, and when asked about Israel's involvement in regional organization replied in very general terms to the effect that there are numerous obstacles on the way to direct cooperation between Israel and the Arabs, but Britain would continue to work towards this goal. Elath concludes that he will continue to talk to Shuckburgh with the aim of obtaining more information in order to understand his conclusions from his visit to the region, and only then should a decision be taken about an approach by Israel to Eden.[4]

Notes

1. See Nos. 498, 549.
2. On 21-23 December, talks were held in London between the representatives of Jordan – the Prime Minister Tawfik Abu al-Huda and the Minister of Defence, Anwar Nusaibah – and between the British representatives Nutting and Shuckburgh, regarding the amended text of the Anglo-Jordanian treaty of 1948. The talks ended inconclusively.
3. See No. 530 and n. 4.
4. In a letter of the same day, Elath wrote that in this conversation with Shuckburgh there was no hint whatever regarding the territorial matter which Eban had alluded to in No. 549. He reiterated his suggestion that they ought not hasten to make a direct appeal to Eden before more was known about Shuckburgh's report. To this end, he asked for information from Washington and Paris about Shuckburgh's talks with George Allen. (See Elath to Lourie, 22 December 1954, 130.13/2592/23.)

566. R. Shiloah (Washington) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 22 December 1954

Coded Tel. WIA293; Inc.: 93.01/2211/12

Summary

Shiloah reports on Eshkol's meeting with Johnston and Barnes. The conversation was general and Eshkol put forward Israel's demands vigorously. He raised once again the problem of the Litani River and the idea of a canal from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea. Johnston replied concerning the Litani that the time was not right for discussions with Lebanon. As for the canal, he would be prepared to discuss it during his visit to Israel. They also spoke about an atomic power plant and Johnston mentioned the American plan to build an atomic plant in one of the Latin American states and that he had proposed a similar plant in Israel in cooperation with an Arab country, but this had not been received by those involved with the right degree of courage and enthusiasm. He stated that he intended to visit Israel during the last week of January.

Notes

1. They inquired at the ministry concerning the content of Eshkol's meeting with Johnston on 14 December. In the consultations held in Israel before the finance minister left for the United States on 5 December, it was decided that Eshkol, who had participated in almost all the stages of the negotiations with Johnston during his last visit to Israel, would meet with him in the United States. (Telegram 197 from the M.F.A. to the embassy in Washington, 22 December 1954, 93.01/2211/12; letter from Herzog to Eban, 6 December 1954, 130.02/3694/9.)
2. At a discussion held in the U.N. General Assembly on the subject of international cooperation in the development of the peaceful uses of atomic energy (see No. 549, n. 4) Romulo, the Philippines representative, suggested building an experimental nuclear reactor on the Israel border with one of the Arab states and thereby to enable the Israelis and the Arabs to work together on a U.N. project and to contribute to the solution of the conflict in the Holy Land. (See *GAOR, Ninth Session, Plenary Meetings*, 4 December 1954, pp. 341-342.)

567. A. Eban (Washington) to the United States Division. 24 December 1954

Coded Tel. WIA310; Outg: 93.01/2211/12

Summary

Eban reacts to the suggestion[1] to initiate a move to change the American grant to a loan. In his discussion with Eshkol, they had agreed that there was no advantage to this. In addition to the prime minister's arguments, he wished to point out that the grant this year would be nearer to 40 million dollars, and not as they had assumed nearer to 30 million.[2] Also, the assumption that the United States would prefer a loan to a grant is not evident. The change to a loan involves them in the repayment of sums, in various currencies, that they don't know how to deal with. It was thus decided that only if it becomes evident that the change to a loan would give Israel a substantial increase, would the matter be raised again. Clarifications would continue with friends and in the meantime Israel would continue to request the continuation of the grant.[3]

Notes

1. A telegram from the United States Division to the Israel embassy in Washington (23 December 1954, 130.09/2310/8) suggesting presenting a motion in the discussions of the House of Representatives Allocations Committee that whoever received a loan would receive a larger amount than in a Grant-in-Aid, and then Israel could consider its steps in the light of the reactions of the representatives of the U.S. Government.

   After it emerged that the amount of the grant to be given to Israel for this year would not exceed 30 million dollars, half as a loan, the treasury officials suggested announcing that Israel would forego the grant in the following year and that it be replaced by a loan, both for economic reasons (the risk from the standpoint of foreign currency was not very great) and also for internal educational purposes and for political-informational reasons vis à vis the United States. Sharett was opposed for the following reasons: damage to the U.J.A., while they were trying to revive it; the impression that was liable to be created among the Jews and the Administration that Israel was seeking to be freed from its ties with the United States; uncertainty that the transition from grant to loan would increase the sum; and finally – the consideration that it was not worthwhile for Israel to remove itself from the frameworks of grants which had been discussed recently. (See Sapir to the Israel mission in New York, for Eshkol, Telegram 801, 21 December 1954, 130,09/2331/7; Sharett to the Israel embassy in Washington, Telegram 204, 2 December 1954, 130.09/2310/8.)
2. See No. 522.
3. See ibid., n. 4.

568. I. L. Gideon (Moscow) to the East European Division. 24 December 1954

Orig.: 130.11/2502/8

Summary

Over a year has passed since the Israeli legation had reopened in Moscow,[1] and Gideon wished to review the position of relations between the two countries, in which certain changes had come about.

1. The new regime under Malenkov differs in many ways from the preceding one. The change is more in manner and methods rather than aims. Stalin's dictatorship has been replaced by a collective regime run by internal negotiation and compromise. This situation gives officials and party leaders more power. Unrest among the public is evident as are demands for improvements in the standard of living. The regime is making efforts in this direction, and to this end has reduced the tension in international relations and revealed more understanding and sensitivity to world public opinion.

2. The Jewish problem is the only one for which the regime has not found a solution. Thirty-seven years after the revolution, the Jews have remained a segregated entity that has not become integrated. Furthermore, they do not have a territory, language or national life of their own. The regime is aware of this, and he assumes that one day they will decide to tackle the problem. There are two paths that can be followed: dispersion of the Jews in small isolated groups throughout the empire, or granting permission to emigrate.

3. Activity by the legation – small-scale consular activities for the unification of families presenting the matter as humanitarian. It seems to him that this quiet method is showing success. A sort of understanding exists that the issue will not be raised on a large scale and that individual cases were being dealt with.

4. Action throughout the world. The Soviets are now sensitive to world public opinion. They hold in high esteem, perhaps exaggerated, the impact of Israel on public opinion in the Western world. Activities on behalf of Soviet Jewry should continue and non-Zionist bodies especially should be activated and perhaps particularly supporters of the Soviet Union.

He concludes by stating that these are his thoughts on the subject for consideration by the ministry. There is no way of knowing what the future holds. However, matters should not be left to chance.

Note

1. Diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union were resumed in July 1953, after being severed in February 1953 following the bombing of the U.S.S.R. legation in Israel.

569. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 26 December 1954

Coded Tel. 216; Outg: 130.09/2310/8

Summary

Rafael calls the attention of the embassy to certain developments during the past few days[1] which require extreme caution in every statement made concerning the *Bat Galim* and the trial in Egypt which could possibly be interpreted by the regime there as provocation. Action must be continued to get the Powers to bring pressure to bear on Egypt to allow the ship to continue its journey with its crew and cargo prior to the debate in the Security Council. Israel has learned from a reliable source that there is apprehension that the Egyptians would release the ship in keeping with the precedent of the Samir[2] – they would transfer the crew to the border of the Gaza Strip and send the ship with an Egyptian crew out of Egyptian territorial waters. In discussions with the Powers, they should be warned against this intention.[3]

Notes

1. Allusion to the exchange of messages with Egypt – see Nos. 559, 562.
2. See No. 523 and n. 1.
3. See also No. 570 and n. 2.

570. G. Rafael (Jerusalem) to Sh. Divon (Rome). 27 December 1954

Coded Tel. 920; Outg: 130.09/2356/5

Summary

Rafael instructs Divon to send a message to Egypt through his friend in Paris, that Israel objects to receiving the crew of the *Bat Galim* overland.[1] He should stress Israel's disappointment that instead of putting an end to this episode, the Egyptians are complicating it and raising obstacles to finding a solution to the navigation issue. This will force Israel to fight for its rights in the Security Council. On the other hand, putting an end to the episode on Israel's terms would open new horizons well known to Nasser.[2]

Notes

1. The Egyptians informed of this intention in a letter to the Security Council of 23 December. (U.N. Document S/3335.) In Israel it was decided not to cooperate officially in arranging the release of the crew alone, since by so doing Israel would give up the demand for freedom of navigation in the Canal, but if the Egyptians faced it with a fait accompli, the crew would be received with open arms at a certain distance from the border. (See Rivkin's memorandum and appendices in File 130.02/2436/7; Sharett's telegram to Eban, No. 218, 27 December 1954, 130.02/2452/4).

   On the 28 December, the chairman of the Armistice Commission replied to Egypt that he would not convene the Commission. The matter was still on the agenda of the Security Council, and he would have to wait for its decision. (See Tekoah to the Israel mission to the U.N., 29 December 1954, 130.09/2331/7.)
2. Divon replied that he would relay the message via his Egyptian friend Sadiq who was due to arrive in Paris. (See Telegrams 803 and 804, 28 December 1954, 130.02/24543/20.) On 30 December, after the Egyptians informed that they would return the crew on the same day even without the mediation of the Armistice Commission (see No. 575) Rafael instructed Divon to raise the matter once again with his friend and to request him to cable immediately to his superiors. (Rafael to Divon, 30 December 1954, 130.02/2453/20.)

571. Ch. Yahil [Jerusalem] to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 27 December 1954

Orig.: 130.02/2413/3

Summary

Yahil reports on the statement concerning Israel made by the head of the German information services, Von Eckardt. According to this statement, the decision to establish relations with Israel is dependent on Israel, and Germany would not press the matter. If Israel decides that the time has come – Germany would welcome the decision gladly, and if it decides that the time is not yet ripe – Germany will respect that decision. Because of the past, he understands the psychological difficulty in Israel concerning recognition and the desire to see how Germany's character develops and to what extent it can be relied on. In any event, it is preferable that whenever the decision is taken it should be based on a large majority in the Knesset and such a decision taken later, in two to three years time, is preferable to an immediate decision with a small majority. Yahil notes that this statement is convenient for Israel, although he believes that it does not reflect the opinion of all those involved in Germany's foreign policy, and could strengthen opinion in Israel that the matter is not pressing.

572. D. Hacohen (Rangoon) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 27 December 1954

Coded Tel. 115; Inc.: 130.09/2360/9

Summary

In an interview with U Nu he had stressed Israel's right as an independent Asian nation to participate in the conference being planned in Bandung,[1] and that Arab pressure should not be submitted to. Immediately after the interview, under pressure from U Nu, the cabinet resolved to firmly demand that Israel be permitted to participate, even as a condition of Burma's participation. Despite this, there is no guarantee that U Nu will not give in to pressure from Nehru.[2]

Notes

1. The reference is to the Bandung Conference, the first conference of the independent states in Asia and Africa, which was due to convene in April 1955 in Bandung, Indonesia. On 28-29 December 1954, the heads of the five states which had participated in the April-May 1954 Colombo Conference – India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma and Indonesia – gathered in Bogor near Jakarta in order to decide on the agenda and the list of invitees to the Bandung Conference. According to press reports the name of Israel was deleted because of the opposition of the Pakistani Prime Minister, Mohammed Ali.

   Before the meeting in Bogor, a directive was sent from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the legation in Rangoon: "Don't press, just stress that we would have gladly accepted an invitation and rely on our friends that our non-participation will not be exploited to attack us." (See Telegram 163, 17 December 1954, 130.09/2360/7.)
2. At a press conference on 30 December, the day after the meeting in Bogor, Nehru expressed his regret over the non-invitation of Israel, and explained that some states had opposed this. He again expressed his regret at a meeting with Hacohen in Delhi, explained that it was necessary to compromise and promised that the situation would not last for long. (See Hacohen to the M.F.A., Telegram 120, 2 January 1955, 130.09/2360/9.) See also D. Hacohen, *Burma Diary*, pp. 358-362, 368-369 [Hebrew].)

573. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 29 December 1954

Coded Tel. 224; Outg: 130.09/2310/8

Summary

In reply to Eban's cable,[1] Sharett tells him to ensure that the approach to the American president be made immediately sentence is handed down and his intervention be demanded within an hour or two. It should be taken into account that if a death sentence is imposed it will be carried out in a matter of hours.[2]

Notes

1. Eban's telegram to Eytan, (No. 311, 24 December 1954, 93.01/2210/20) who reports, in continuation of No. 554 and n. 3, that he had informed Hoover and the Near Eastern Office in the Department of State, that in the event of death sentences in Cairo he would advise a direct appeal by President Eisenhower to Nasser.
2. On the same day, Eytan instructed the missions in New York, London, Paris and Rome: "We are now entering the final phases of the trial, and we cannot do much

more to make an effective impact on its process. On the contrary, we have to be careful and warn all those working on behalf of the prisoners lest a careless step or a too forceful expression of opinion sabotage what has been achieved. On the other hand, we have already to plan measures to be taken in the event of death sentences." (Eytan to the Israel missions abroad, 29 December 1954, 130.09/2320/1.)

On 27 January 1955, the military tribunal passed sentence on the members of the network: Moshe Marzouk and Shmuel Azzar were sentenced to death and hanged on 31 January. The others, with the exception of Eli Naim and Cezar Cohen, who were acquitted of guilt, were sentenced to terms of imprisonment. Levi and Natanson to life imprisonment; Robert Dassa and Marcelle (Victorinne) Ninio to 15 years; Shmuel Meyuhas and Meir Zafran to 7 years. Meyuhas and Zafran were released at the end of their terms of imprisonment, and the others – within the framework of the exchange of prisoners with Egypt after the Six Day War.

574. Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem) to the Minister of Defence. 29 December 1954

Copy: 130.02/2394/4

Summary

The prime minister and minister of foreign affairs sends to the minister of defence a series of directives he had drawn up for cooperation and coordination between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the General Staff of the Israel Defence Forces, and between the two ministers, concerning contacts with the Mixed Armistice Commissions.[1] In accordance with these directives, the government is represented in the Mixed Armistice Commissions by the Army. However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will send, as it deems fit, a representative to each session. In contacts with the chief of staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, the government will be represented by the chief of the general staff, but a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will attend, except in cases when the Israeli chief of staff wishes to conduct the meeting alone. Of course the prime minister can meet with the U.N. chief of staff whenever the need arises. Concerning correspondence, a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will participate in formulating letters to the U.N. chief of staff, and on important matters a draft will be submitted to the prime minister and minister of foreign affairs for his approval. In all matters of principle, or those that could lead to complications or difficulties in foreign relations, consultation will be held between the prime minister and minister of foreign affairs and the minister of defence, after which the line to be followed will be determined.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 297.
2. Following these directives, the minister of defence informed the chief of staff that he would no longer deal with matters relating to the Armistice Commissions, and that on these matters he must request instructions from the prime minister. (See the director of the minister of defence's Bureau E. Evron, to the chief of staff, 9 January 1955, CZA245/199.)

575. M. Sharett (Jerusalem) to A. Eban (Washington). 30 December 1954

Coded Tel. TNWA672; Outg: 130.09/2312/8

Summary

Sharett cables that a last effort must be made to dissuade the Egyptians from returning the *Bat Galim* crew overland.[1] He must meet immediately with Hoover and implore him to take urgent action in Cairo to get the ship sent northward together with its crew. If the Egyptians agree, Israel will not demand a debate in the Security Council and for a specified time will not renew attempts to send another Israeli vessel through the Canal. It can be hinted to the Egyptians that they can bring the vessel to Port Said themselves, place the crew on board and allow it to sail. He informs Eban that Israel is attempting to apply direct pressure on the Egyptians, but asks him to keep this secret.[2] Thus American assistance could be vital at this juncture. He asks him to act immediately because the following day, Friday, is crucial.[3]

Notes

1. On the same morning, 30 December, the Egyptian representative informed the chairman of the Armistice Commission that they would free the crew of the *Bat Galim* on 1 January 1955, at Kilometer 95, and asked him to be present. The Commission chairman repeated his view (see No. 570, n. 1) that the matter was still pending before the Security Council, and therefore no representative of the U.N. Truce Supervision Organization would be present and that he refused to intervene in the matter unless the two parties requested it.

   On 28 December the Egyptian Navy Prize Court ruled that the *Bat Galim* ship was released and could continue its voyage, on condition that it would not pass through the Canal. (See telegrams from Tekoah to the Israel missions abroad, 29, 30 December 1954; message from the chairman of the Armistice Commission to the Israel representative on the Commission, 30 December 1954, all in File 130.02/2436/7.)

2. See No. 570 and n. 2.

3. On the same day, Eban and Shiloah met with Department of State officials and argued according to the instructions in the document presented here. On 31 December, the United States embassy in Cairo, acting on instructions from Washington, contacted the Egyptian minister of foreign affairs with a recommendation to allow the *Bat Galim* passage through the Canal, even with an Egyptian crew as Sharett had suggested, in return for concessions which Israel was prepared to make. The Egyptian reply was negative, with an explanation that the Arab world was already accusing Egypt of attempting to make peace with Israel. (See Eban to Sharett, WNTA99, 30 December 1954, 93.01/2211/12; *FRUS, 1952-54*, Vol. IX [part 1], Nos. 944-946.)

   The *Bat Galim* crew was released on 1 January 1955 at Kilometer 95 of the Gaza-Strip-Israel border. No official representative was waiting there, neither from Israel nor U.N. personnel, and they crossed the border on foot. The ship was not released.

   The Security Council resumed its discussions on 4 January 1955. The Egyptian representative stated that his country had already released the crew of the *Bat Galim* and was ready to transfer the ship's cargo to a neutral vessel and to discuss through the Armistice Commission how to release the ship itself. The representatives of the United States, Britain, France, Belgium and Brazil voiced criticism of the Egyptian interpretation of the Constantinople Convention regarding the passage through the Canal and its non-compliance with the 1951 Security Council resolution, and called on it to remove all restrictions on shipping. On 13 January 1955 the Security Council ended the debate on the affair without reaching a decision. The Council President in his summed up remarks expressed the hope that the problem of the release of the *Bat Galim* would be resolved through the Armistice Commission. In the end, the ship was confiscated by the Egyptians and handed over to the Egyptian Navy.

576. Sh. Divon (Paris) to M. Sharett and G. Rafael. 31 December 1954

Coded Tel. 734; Inc.: 130.02/2453/20

Summary

Divon reports on the arrival of the "friend" (Sadiq) who brought with him a message from the people in Egypt who sent him. (For the original message see Main Volume, p. 929.)

As stated in the message, he [Sadiq] has written replies and reactions, which he would deliver orally. At a short meeting held immediately on his arrival, he gave an outline of the reactions concerning the trial and the *Bat Galim*. According to him, the accused would not be executed,[2] but there can be no interference with the legal proceedings. The vessel would be released

within the next few days but would not be permitted to pass through the Canal.[3]

Palmon had arrived in Paris. They would both meet with the "friend," listen to what he had to say and cable a few hours later.[4]

Notes.

1. See No. 559.
2. See No. 573, n. 2.
3. See No. 577 and notes.
4. See No. 577.

577. Sh. Divon and Y. Palmon (Paris) to M. Sharett and G. Rafael. 31 December 1954

Coded Tel. 738; Inc.: 130.02/2453/20

Summary

Divon and Palmon report on their conversation with the Egyptian emissary[1] who stated as follows:

1. The ship and its crew would be released, but would not be permitted to pass through the Canal. Security Council resolutions would not change the Egyptian decision. There is no possibility at the moment of changing the situation as regards passage through the Canal. Oil will continue to be considered as military material.

2. Regarding the trial, a just procedure is promised, but the government is unable to intervene.

3. On the matter of propaganda, they expressed their objection to the Israeli propaganda, including Sharett's statement in the Knesset.[2] They stressed the caution and moderation shown by Nasser in his statements concerning Israel. Under the present circumstances it is difficult to influence the press.

4. They want to maintain quiet on the borders and are taking steps towards this. They hope that Israel is doing likewise.

5. It is not possible at the moment to consider holding high-level talks. They are satisfied with existing contacts[3] and the emissary had Nasser's full confidence.

6. As for relations between the two countries, they complained that Israel had aggravated matters by active intervention against the agreement with Britain, the sabotage and espionage network and the *Bat Galim* episode. In such a situation, the first steps required are the reduction of tension between the two countries.

Palmon and Divon's conclusions are that under the present circumstances it would be useless to take further measures about the *Bat Galim* which could worsen the fate of the accused in the trial. The main concern is lenient sentences in the trial. In their opinion there is no point in sending a further message. They intend to express their protest, but continue their contacts with the emissary. Request instructions.

Notes

1. No. 576.
2. See No. 539, n. 3.
3. Refers first and foremost to the missions of Orbach (see No. 510) and Blaustein's contacts (see Nos. 541, 543), but also alludes apparently to contacts with the Egyptian military attaché in Washington (see No. 452, n. 3), and perhaps even to the September mission of Strachey, a British member of Parliament, who was asked by Sharett to clarify with Nasser what he meant in the remarks he had made in a speech on the need for concessions in the Negev. (See Strachey to the prime minister of Israel, 29 September 1954, P.R.O., F.O. 371/111066; Sharett to Strachey, 28 November 1954, 130.15/3744/3.)

578. E. Elath (London) to the British Commonwealth Division. 31 December 1954

Coded Tel. 356; Outg.: 93.04/40/17

Summary

Elath reports on Gazit's conversation with Powell-Jones, British Foreign Office official responsible for Middle East defence matters. He stated that a speedy reply to Israel's requests for arms should not be expected. The British are still convinced that Israel has superiority over the Arabs and thus are delaying granting permits to all countries in the region with the aim of reducing the rate of armament. As for Eden's statement, the Foreign Secretary said explicitly that there is no need for explanations beyond the statement itself. They had withdrawn their forces from Egypt, but were continuing to retain considerable forces in Cyprus, Libya and Jordan.

Political considerations and concern about the use of atomic weapons in their opinion disqualify Israel as a military base in times of peace. In the event of war, it is clear to them that all transport lines will have to pass through Israel but they have not yet reached immediate conclusions on this situation. As for the organization of countries in the region into a collective defence network, they had no disagreement with the Americans or with the Turks. They believed that they should wait patiently until the countries in the region show their readiness for such a move. In his opinion, sensational developments should not be expected during the visit of Turkey's prime minister to Iraq. The Turks are prepared to reach any arrangement with the Arabs in their desire to protect their rear.

Elath says that he would try to check Powell-Jones' statements and their significance through further meetings including discussions with Shuckburgh and Nutting.[2]

Notes

1. On 24 February 1955, Iraq and Turkey signed a defence pact, the Baghdad Pact. Britain, Pakistan and Iran joined this pact later.
2. Full report of the conversation see Gazit to Elath, 31 December 1954, 93.04/40/17.

579. United States Division (Jerusalem) to the Israel Embassy in Washington. 31 December 1954

Coded Tel. TNWA673; Outg.: 130.09/2312/8

Summary

Herzog reports on a conversation with White concerning the delegation to China. He asked whether Israel was determined to send the delegation and when this would take place.[1] Herzog replied that no date had yet been fixed, and that cancelling the visit would be construed negatively from the point of view of the United States as well, as it would be interpreted as the result of pressure. White replied that no such pressure had been applied and the Department of State had only drawn attention to the possible negative public reaction in the U.S. that might follow. Herzog added explanations: the delegation would not be a high-level one, and would have no senior political figure, it would consist of persons in the area of finance and trade, its purpose would be purely exploratory and there was no intention of signing

any agreements, and thus the issue of the Economic Defence Regulations will not arise.[2]

Notes

1. See No. 551.
2. On 2 January 1955, a consultation was held in the ministry of foreign affairs concerning the delegation to China. It was agreed that the departure of the delegation must not be delayed and attempts should be made to combine visits to other places in Asia. Regarding relations with the Americans, it was decided not to raise the subject in conversations with them, but only to answer questions if they came up. (See summary of the consultation in File 93.13/226/43)

   The delegation, headed by David Hacohen, visited China from 30 January to 19 February 1955 – see D. Hacohen, *Burma Diary*, pp. 376-418 (Hebrew).
3. See No. 502, n. 6.

580. Note from the Israel Ambassador in Washington to the U.S. Secretary of State. 31 December 1954

Notes

1. See No. 561.
2. See No. 123 and No. 1.
3. See No. 443 and n. 4.
4. See No. 520, n. 1.
5. In a Note dated 22 January 1955, the secretary of state replied that the aim of the military aid to Iraq was to help with the strategic defence of the region against possible aggression. The United States opposed aggression, local imbalance and an arms race, and would make an effort to prevent them. He added that the United States was still guided by the Three Power Declaration of 1950 and that Iraq was becoming a reasonable state and was not planning any aggression. (The letter in File 130.20/2475/10.)

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Abbreviations:
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